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“Gender Relations in Selected Restoration Comedies in the Mirror of Sociological Role Theory“

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1 Introduction

Restoration Comedy with its recurring themes and types of 'the man about town', the witty heroine, love affairs or marriage as an industry are indeed in itself a reflection of the major cultural changes that deeply affected women's place in society at the time. The years from 1660-1710, the return of Charles II to England and the restoration of monarchy, as well as "theatrical experiment and the conventions of the time" (see Vrablitz 2-3), marked a period of profound and tumultuous change and had a huge impact on society, the English culture and – as a consequence - on Restoration Comedy. Not only because Charles II who had spent years in exile in France introduced French mannerisms, cavaliers and interest in (French) drama (McDonald 2) but also because his

> worldly and witty Court patronized a theatre which catered for aristocratic taste, in intrigue, in fashionable conversation, in the merry-go-round of sex, marriage and adultery, even in the high-flown nonsense of heroic plays and lachrymose tragedies. (Jeffares vii)

The Restoration Period was indeed a time of conventions and transgressions, especially in regard to the ongoing debate on the social position of women in society as a whole: even though women were still legally (and also according to the church) subordinate to men, toward the latter half of the seventeenth century women were allowed a greater amount of liberty and equality in terms of choosing a partner in marriage etc. (Young 16 ff) For the first time, we also have actresses on the stage.

In Restoration Comedy, female characters were most often stereotypes adapted from medieval satires: the character of the shrew or the conventional nagging housewife for example followed the traditional pattern „of the shrewish wife reformed by her husband". (McDonald 10) Women were thought to be fragile, weak and soft, and it is during the Restoration Period that the common expressions "the fair sex", "the soft sex" or "the gentle sex" came to be used to describe women's qualities and ideals. Women, their traditional standing in society and the way they were treated by their families, husbands and by society in general, were illustrated within the process of love and courtship. Since seventeenth-century political philosophy and religious teaching enforced the notion of patriarchy, women remained under the constraint of male authority

and society's customs and were usually depicted as oppressed and inferior objects. (Fromm 9)

Restoration Comedy provided its Restoration contemporaries (and still provides us today) with a social commentary, particularly emphasizing „the fragility of love in marriage and its cold-blooded vision of marriage as a business contract." (McDonald 17) It differs from the previous comedy in its class character: it deals with high society's gallantries, underlining the distinctive features of the culture it reflects, picking up on that broad, important and often very entertaining topic of human relations and featuring almost exclusively recurring themes such as love, sexual intrigue and cuckoldry. (Jeffares vii) Marriage was a vital connective issue, it was an important topic that each and every one could relate to or at least had an opinion of. (Singh 195)

Another strong element in Restoration comedies are the recurring stereotypical characters or figures: usually the plot revolves around a graceful young beau-rake, a faithless wife, a deceived husband, a mistress and a charming, young heroine who is bestowed in the end on the rake. Those relationships between characters have been investigated many a time; most commonly it is the gender issues and cuckolding plots that spark scholarly interest, more precisely the relationship between the cuckolding rake and the adulterous wife is the one that is most frequently analyzed. Gender relations, therefore, will be an important part of my analysis. Gender, the division of people into separate categories, namely "men" and "women", is socially constructed. It is acquired through interaction and socialization and results in different behavior, emotions and attitudes of men and women. (Borgatta; Montgomery 1057). Gender relations can be described as the way a culture of society defines a man or a woman's rights, responsibilities and their identity and relation to one another. (Kuscher 40)

The aim of this thesis is to analyze said gender relations in a handful selected Restoration Comedies in the light of sociological role theory. Role theory primarily concerns itself with characteristic social or societal roles, positions and behaviors that are assumed by social participants. Every individual occupies a set of roles or positions and endorses normative behavioral expectations for

itself. But not only do individuals hold behavioral expectations for themselves, they also hold expectations for other individuals occupying counter-positions. (Jackson 50) My intent is to use the concept of role theory to unmask Restoration Comedy characters' real identities, which are (usually) carefully hidden behind high self-monitoring abilities, role-play and social masks. Looking at the various characters' relationships I will point out their roles and positions in society and compare the role of men and women in the Restoration plays mentioned below.

The first part of my thesis will be looking at sociological role theory: I am going to introduce theoretical concepts and ideas to help identify and analyze some of the characters' diverse social roles. The different aspects of social roles are very closely interrelated to the inner self, a person's core so to speak, and can give the reader valuable insight into a character and his motives that lie beyond his actions and conduct. Furthermore I am also going to introduce the notion of self-monitoring, a concept used in social psychology, that helps categorize people as either high- or low self-monitors depending on their degree of expressive self-presentation, and basically helps to point out social and situational appropriateness of certain behavior and self-display.

The second part of my thesis is dedicated to the literary genre of Restoration Comedy and selected works of Wycherley, Etherege, Congreve and Farquhar:

The first two subchapters (3.1-3.2) will provide the necessary background to the historical, political, social and sociological setting, putting special emphasis on the legal, social and marital status of women during and around the peak of the Restoration Period. These chapters outline the complex topic of Restoration society, the roles of women and marriage and the various opinions thereof that are expressed in the plays, and as they provide the necessary background to my analysis they are dealt with at some length.

Subchapter 3.3 gives an in-depth look at the literary genre, the typical Restoration plot construction and its setting(s), whereas subchapter 3.4 is entirely dedicated to the treatment of gender roles and the main goal of Restoration Comedies, which was to mock society or lift it up for scrutiny to the audience.

The subchapter 3.5 is the main body of this thesis, the analysis of four Restoration Comedies. Listed in chronological order, the following 4 works were chosen for comparison:

William Wycherley	*The Country Wife*	(1675)
George Etherege	*The Man of Mode or, Sir Fopling Flutter*	(1676)
William Congreve	*The Way of the World*	(1700)
George Farquhar	*The Beaux' Stratagem*	(1707)

To keep my examples and quotes as readable and free from distractions as possible, the plays will be referred to by their acronyms, abbreviations formed from the initial components of their titles, *CW, MoM, WoW* and *BS* respectively, instead of reproducing the authors' in every parenthetical reference.

References from *The Country Wife* and *The Man of Mode or, Sir Fopling Flutter* will only be made to acts and scenes and page numbers instead of lines, as my primary source, Salgādo's Penguin Classic Edition from 1968, does not provide numbered lines.

Furthermore, all names and quotations will be quoted in the exact likeness of the editions used, thus slight differences in spelling may occur and are by all means no mistakes on my account.

2 Role Theory

2.1 Introduction & Definition

The term ‘role theory’ has been in use since Theodore R. Sarbin’s article “Role Theory” which was published in the *Handbook of Social Psychology* in 1954. In it, Sarbin describes role theory as a model that tries to explain the correlation between individuals and social institutions such as society, organizations, groups etc., and the expectations these individuals and institutions have towards each other. (Wiswede 7)

According to Biddle, role theory explains

> patterned and characteristic social behavior, parts or identities that are assumed by social participants and scripts or expectations for behaviors that are understood by all and adhered to by performers. (68)

Solomon et al. (102) break the definition further down by saying that role theory is the study of “(…) cluster[s] of social cues that guide and direct an individual’s behavior in a given setting (…) as determined by the reactions of fellow actors and observers”.

Role theory postulates that individuals occupy a variety of social roles – a term coined by George Simmel in 1908. A social role (or social function) is not a person’s conduct in public but it is the set of expectations people have towards the person in that role. (Dreitzel 43) (Jackson 50) Social roles are always tied to certain social positions, intersections of social relations in the differentiating social relation framework. (Dreitzel 43) (Mengel *Rollentheorie* 20) They always complement one another. For example: one can not take the role of a father or a mother for example without having someone take the role of the child; a teacher is only a teacher if he has students to teach; a doctor is only a doctor if he has patients to treat. The rights of the owners of said roles are at the same time the duties of the role partner and roles only become apparent in relation to other people and their role(s). (Wiswede 27)

Social roles as well as social positions are relatively consistent and they each specify certain normative behaviors. People both endorse normative behavioral expectations and also hold behavioral expectations for other members of

society, or friends and family for example. These sets of expectations are called role expectations. (Wiswede 18) (Mengel *Rollentheorie* 20ff)

People very quickly internalize and adapt to their roles as it is very important for an individual to meet the expectations that are tied to their position and to not have to constantly think about whether their behavior is appropriate at the time in a set environment. It is believed that role learning is the primary process underlying social conformity and that social expectation can actually generate normative behaviors in other people. (Biddle 79) Wiswede (34 ff) suggests that children learn through games and play to take on roles and to internalize expectations associated with them. This initial labeling process is commonly known as altercasting; it is an identification process and assigning of salient individual roles, during which not only personal roles are defined but also the complementary role of the partner. (Solomon et al. 104 ff)

Inconsistency with role expectations is common and failure to meet our partner's expectations concerning our behavior, if our conception of our role differs from our partners' conception, results in a discrepancy in the system, also called role discrepancy. Negative discrepancy between expectations concerning behavior and perceived behavior will lead to corresponding dissatisfaction and possibly sanctions. (Solomon et al. 103)

Role congruence on the other hand, the deeper understanding of our roles and role expectations, is partly determined by past experience, the amount of interaction in that role and other dispositional characteristics. Role congruence is found where roles are clear and there is an accurate mutual comprehension of role expectations. (Solomon et al. 104f)

Goffman describes all behavior that is not congruent with normative expectations of behavior as role distance, which can refer to both a certain distance to one's role, as well as to a total rejection of an expected role altogether. Role distance is one of the most important skills required to successfully enact a social role and to be properly socialized in a role. (Solomon et al. 103) Empathy is another important skill to successfully socialize in a role; being able to foresee and predict the behavior of other role-players, seeing things from a different perspective and/or putting oneself in somebody else's

position, can help consider one's own role behavior. (Mengel *Rollentheorie* 24)

Successful socializing in a role is impossible if a person is put in a position where different people have different and/or clashing expectations. We call a situation in which expectations are clashing and cannot be fulfilled all at the same time an intra-role conflict. If it is not the expectations that are clashing but the roles themselves, if there is an apparent lack of clarity about people's roles and expectations in an interaction, we call that an inter-role conflict. It is not so rare that two roles or expectations are clashing and cannot be fulfilled at the same time. (Mengel *Rollentheorie* 20)

According to Van Laan, social roles help a person or a character in a play establish an identity for him- or herself. (23) But a person is not just the sum of all his different social roles or role identities: a role identity is merely the relevant aspect of social identity in a specific situation whereas the inner self, a person's true identity so to speak, is only established through the process of introspection during interactions with others. It is by observing both one's own behavior towards others and the expectations the observed have towards oneself, that we acquire insight into the inner self – since behaving towards others always implies behaving towards oneself as well. (Mengel *Rollentheorie* 20f) This I-identity, being able to distinguish and talk about the self just as one would talk about other people, is the basis for successful role-play. (Dreitzel 20) (Mengel *Rollentheorie* 22)

2.2 Role-play

Role-play can be loosely defined as the act of changing behavior to fill social roles or to act out adopted roles. The Oxford English Dictionary's offers a much tighter description of role-playing as

> the acting out or performance of a particular role, either consciously (as a technique in psychotherapy or training) or unconsciously, in accordance with the perceived expectations of society as regards a person's in a particular context. (Electronic Source: Oxford Dictionaries 2012)

Role-play takes place in social situations, which can be defined as a complex of regulations of social relational structures that are defined by time and space and confined to specific situations in which the acting subject's behavior is taking

place. (Dreitzel 172) (Mengel *Rollentheorie* 23) We learn to internalize attitudes and behavior emphasized by family and society from an early age on, making it "one of the central processes of internalization." (Elms iii)

Janis and King (2) argue that because people are forced to role-play in so many everyday situations, the ideas expressed cannot all be in accord with private convictions. But role-playing is necessary to learn about opponent's expectations and by enacting and interpreting our own role accordingly we can control and channel information about ourselves: according to Dreitzel, role holders interpret and orchestrate every role as to elicit desired impressions and/or to control what kind of information they want to convey by playing a role and how. Dreitzel calls this act of orchestrating a role impression management, which is essentially the act of expressing or presenting behavior in a way that outsiders get an idealized picture of the person through his behavior. Investing in personal visual identity or outward appearance is a technique of impression management, so is putting up scenery on television to create the impression that the anchor man is someplace else than in the blank, old newsroom. No matter the technique itself, impression management always requires continuous and careful control of the pieces of information that could potentially blur – or worse – paint a wrong picture. (Dreitzel 201f)

One way of monitoring and controlling behavior to eliminate impressions that are potentially harmful to the role is through self-monitoring:

2.3 Self-monitoring

Self-monitoring is a theory used in social psychology that assumes that a significant correlation between given attitude on the one side and actual behavior on the other can only be expected of people who standardize their behavior according to their convictions – as opposed to people orienting themselves on situational conditions. (Mengel *Self-monitoring* 134) Because people alter and adjust their behavior according to other people's behavior so that it will best fit the situation (and purpose), self-monitoring can be regarded as a form of impression management. (Mengel *Self-monitoring 144)*

An ideal-typical high self-monitoring person is particularly considerate of other people's self-display in social settings so as to adjust their own verbal and extra-verbal self-portrayal. People exhibiting high self-monitoring skills quickly adapt to new situations and are very adept at controlling their emotions; they know exactly how to use their abilities of adapting and controlling to evoke exactly the kinds of impressions they want to transmit in social interactions and due to their expressive behavior they simulate certain sentiments convincingly. (Mengel *Self-monitoring* 134)

An ideal-typical low self-monitoring person on the other hand is not so mindful of adequate situational self-display; instead, their conduct is determined by their attitudes, sentiments and affective condition. They are neither willing nor capable of controlling their self-portrayal that is required in certain social interactions, limiting their repertoire of communicating emotions. (Mengel *Self-monitoring* 134)

Whereas high self-monitoring people adjust their behavior and offer a range of possibilities of self-display when finding themselves in new situations, people with low self-monitoring abilities display a generally more comprehensive and situationally less adaptive behavior; but if faced with a situation unfamiliar to them, like a job interview for example, their behavior changes and appears more reflected and controlled than usual. But it is not enough to distinguish people with high self-monitoring skills from people with low self-monitoring abilities but also situations that demand for high self-monitoring abilities from situations that can be managed with low self-monitoring abilities. Human behavior is in fact always related to both the person and his properties as it is to the situation and the actual circumstances. (Mengel *Self-monitoring* 135)

A character with high self-monitoring abilities will only give some indication of his evaluation of the actual situation during which the interaction took place and of the reasons for – or goals of – the interaction. In comparison: a character with low self-monitoring abilities will give information about his self-perception, his beliefs and attitudes and what or how he thinks about himself. (Mengel *Self-monitoring* 135-136)

Making use of the concept of self-monitoring in analyzing plays can therefore provide important pieces of information for the interpretation of a character's behavior and can help decide whether a certain behavior is to be understood in relation to the characters' attitudes and dispositions or to the situational conditions of the interactions. (Mengel *Self-monitoring* 139)

2.4 Inner Nature

Gaining insight into a character's inner nature is not always easy: role-playing and high self-monitoring abilities can mask true attitudes, beliefs and intentions and make it harder for the audience or the reader to „decode". Since it was believed that a woman's appearance and behavior could be an indicator to her social or spiritual identity, women had to be very careful as they would always be carefully examined by Restoration's patriarchal society. It was therefore that women were expected to be „totally self-evident" in their behavior so as to help men comprehend a woman's character – by examining her exterior. (Nägerl 91)

However, there are a few moments, short instances, where character eventually let their masks slip, open up and allow truthful insights into their inner nature and feelings, which can be both voluntary or involuntary. Since behavioral signs were considered unreliable as they could easily be manipulated, controlled or misinterpreted, men would try and interpret female involuntary bodily signs as they are naturally hard or impossible even to fake, and are considered relatively reliable indicators. Such involuntary glimpses generally include body language such as blushing, eye movements, sweating or shivering and shaking for example and exclamatory remarks and emotional outbursts, so called asides. (Nägerl 91ff)

2.4.1. Asides

Asides are both a chance for the audience as well as a technique for the author that allow most authentic and truthful insights into the true, inner nature of a character. A conventionalized monological aside is a piece of honest information that is uttered on stage in the presence of other characters but in contrast to a soliloquy, not directed at them. It is an intentional sharing of information with the audience for the audience's sake. (Pfister 138-139)

If a character addresses the audience directly, either by applying a gesture, mine or using an imperative, or indirectly by simply providing special background information to inform the audience about or prepare for subsequent actions and occurrences, it is called an aside ad spectators. (Pfister 139)

An unintentional sharing of information on the other hand, is a spontaneous and unintended utterance or exclamation in a particular situation, also called a motivated monological aside. It is usually found in dramatic settings and seems to be more natural and plausible reaction than the conventionalized monological aside. (Pfister 139)

Asides supply the audience with all the necessary information and knowledge about the characters' motifs and behaviors, which puts the spectators in a position of omniscience so to speak, whereas most characters on stage are far from apprehending causal relations - a fact that explains and facilitates comical effects. (Pfister 139)

2.4.2. Body Language and Reactions

Body language and bodily reactions are, just like asides, typical hints at the inner self of a character. Body language includes gestures, mimics and facial expressions whereas body reactions include but are not limited to blushing, shivering or sweating. While body language can be faked, body reactions can neither be influenced such as faked or suppressed, nor are they easy to hide. Therefore, both body language and body reactions are good indicators for high- or low self-monitoring abilities and give crucial insight into the inner nature of a character. (Kachur 117)

3 Restoration Comedy

3.1 Historical and Political Background

Generally speaking it can be said that the Restoration Period peaked around the turn of the century, well influenced by the reign of Charles II that during the early period of the Restoration with its dedication to pleasure and celebration, rooted in defiance of strict Puritan ethic that would later be depicted in many a Restoration Comedy, yet many (especially many women writers) wrote well into the first half of the eighteenth century and the reigns of George I and George II. (Vrablitz 5)

After having come back to power, Charles II, who had an immense hatred of stiffness and formality and an immense appetite for pleasure instead (Pinto 13), surrounded himself neither with "the old servants of his father nor the Presbyterian leaders who combined with them to restore the monarchy" (Vrablitz 6), but with a group of younger men, generally known as "the merry gang", or "flashy fry", a group of confident young men

> who abhorred all discourse that was serious, and, in the liberty they assumed in drollery and raillery, preserved no reverence towards God or man, but laughed at all sober men, and even at religion itself. (Pinto 11-12)

A prominent member of the merry gang, the Earl of Rochester, described the "three businesses of the age" as being "Woemen, Polliticks and Drinking" [*sic*] (Pinto in Vrablitz 6)

Charles II's behavior and mannerisms and his lavish, liberated, stylish lifestyle had great influence on the manners and the fashion on society and on women in particular. (Ramczyk 2) John Evelyn describes in a diary entry dating back to 1662 one of Charles II's extravagant parties:

> This evening, according to custom, his Majesty opened the revels of that night by throwing the dice himself in the privy chamber, where was a table set on purpose, and lost is £ 100. (The year before he won £ 1,500.) […] sorry am I that such a wretched custom as play to that excess should be countenanced in a Court, which ought to be an example of virtue to the rest of the kingdom. (Evelyn 354)

But while it is rather easy to pinpoint the beginning of the Restoration period and Restoration Comedy themselves or the people who majorly influenced the

period, it seems more difficult to determine when it ends. So in the literary discourse the term ‘Restoration’ is often circumvented by the phrase ‘Restoration and Eighteenth Century Drama’ and the exact timeline of its beginning and end is considered untidy but also not terribly important: Whereas Muir (15) loosely applies the term ‘Restoration Comedy to plays written between 1660 and 1710, David Hume in his work *Development* states that “[m]ost commonly, the term [Restoration] is meant to include the years 1660-1700, but extension is often made to 1707, or even 1737” (3) and according to Pinto (15) “the Restoration of 1688 put an end to Restoration Comedy.”

3.2 Social and Sociological Background

Having closed down theatres in 1642 the Puritans opposed Charles II’s decision to re-open theatres and even more so his decree of allowing women on stage for the first time in (British) theatre history. The Puritans that opposed his decisions refused to attend theatres, which meant that audience now comprised mostly nobility and aristocrats close to the King’s court. Playwrights responded to the imbalanced composition of the audience and focused on „some of the social abuses practiced within that aristocratic society“, which means that they tried to entertain the audience by openly mocking revered social institutions and social customs that governed this period. (Young 2-3)

Priestley (73) in his note on *Class* establishes that the British class system was imposed from within and not as frequently assumed from above: both the King and the Court advertised a liberal lifestyle and still women had no say in either politics or economics, not even in regards to their own wealth and inheritance. Some scholars like Young (16) argue that „[t]oward [sic!] the latter half of the seventeenth century, the position of women had shown some improvement in English society.“ Others, like Hazel Mews observe that women of the time were confined to the house, confined to their accomplishments and were minors in the eyes of the law. Mews argues that women were „taught to be Proud and Petulant, Delicate and Fantastick, [sic!] Humorous and Inconstant, ‚tis not Strange that the ill effects of this conduct appear in all the future Actions of our Lives.“ (quoted in Schofield 19) Whether or not the position of women was actually showing improvement during the seventeenth century by granting them

greater amounts of equality and liberty, truth is that women were still legally subordinate to men, a view that was fully supported by the church, the state and by society in general. (Young 16 ff)

The reason for scholarly opinions being so divided could be explained by the sexual double standard and the double standard opinions on women of the time. The 'ideal woman' had to be a fragile and delicate, soft, fair and gentle – hence the expressions „the soft sex", „the fair sex" or „the gentle sex" (Vrablitz 6). The double standard of sexual morality, the fact that male lust was considered natural and given, whereas female lust was considered improper and immoral, frequently resulted in the acceptance of men's extra-marital affairs, whereas any sexual misconduct of women was openly disapproved of – both by society in general and by the law – and often resulted in public condemnation and punishment. (Shoemaker 72 ff) And even though 'sex comedies' have been extremely popular at the time, they have also been controversial and it cannot automatically be assumed that the audience always approved of everything that was presented on stage. (Hume *Development* 90)

3.3 Introduction to the Genre, Setting and Plot Construction

3.3.1 Genre

Joseph Wood Krutch establishes that Restoration Comedy was

> derived from the union of certain elements of the old comedy of Humours [sic!] with certain elements in the romantic plays of the same period. From the former it took its realism, and from the latter hints in the handling of dialogue (…) (Electronic Source: Galloway 1996)

Van der Weele agrees with Krutch's notion that Restoration Comedy is realistic and concerned with the true surface of life, adding that it is neither romantic nor poetic, but rather straightforward and direct, because it relies on observations of reality and representations of social situations or delineation of human nature, rather than on any idealistic points of view. (Van der Weele 4-5)

Dobrée among others disagreed with Krutch and Van der Weele in their interpretation of Restoration Comedy. According him, Restoration Comedy did not portray any realistic representations of society and life in general, but

painted a rather distorted picture of the time instead. (Dobrée 171) Because of its polished style, satire on social follies and "its veracious depiction of seventeenth century high life", Restoration Comedy critics often considered it to be artificial and amoral because it deals with fashionable manners rather than with morals. But according to Fujimura Restoration seventeenth century dramatists dealt with moral issues nevertheless, just in a more naturalistic way, "wittily rather than soberly". (Fujimura 4) Therefore Fujimura suggests referring to Restoration Comedy as the 'Comedy of Wit' instead and dropping all other terms and nomenclature. (Fujimura 10)

It was due to the fact that the new subjects of seventeenth century drama were the members of the gentility and not the lower classes that Restoration Comedy first came to be known as 'genteel comedy'. But as the word 'genteel' began to connote affectation, hypocrisy, and pretension, the term was dropped again. Charles Lamb was the first to use the term 'comedy of manners' to indicate that this comedy had to do with "'good manners,' with ‚politeness,' and the existence of a social code'" (Van der Weele 4) but it was not until John Palmer employed it as the title of his study published in 1913, *The Comedy of Manners,* that the designation became generally accepted and used.

The term 'manners' is a modern conception of a society that was obsessed with mores, conventions and affectations. Dryden defined manners as underlying motifs and causes of all action and behavior, as "inclinations, whether natural or acquired, which move and carry us to actions, good, bad, or indifferent (…)". (266 ff) Since people are a product of their manners, Dryden argued, the Comedy of Manners does not directly ridicule the people, but rather "the inability of men to conform to an artificial social standard (…) or the excessive attempts at conformity". (Fujimura 5)

Muir (9) rejects both the term Comedy of Manners and Artificial Comedy, since the plays are neither "divorced from real life" nor dealing with "only with superficial characteristics of men and women, imposed by a sophisticated and artificial society rather than with the permanent manifestations of human nature and with universal human problems."

But whatever the nomenclature for this type of comedy, ‘Restoration Comedy’, ‘Comedy of Wit’, ‘Comedy of Manners’, ‘Genteel Comedy’, ‘High Comedy’, ‘Artificial Comedy’ or ‘Sex Comedy’, terms which have since come to be known also to describe comedies written and performed during the Restoration in England that were notorious for their sexual explicitness, these plays had a big impact on literature and society as a whole, since they not only aim at entertaining the audience but act as a „social commentary“ that gives a unique insight into a fascinating period of English history. (Hume *Rakish Stage* 29)

3.3.2 Setting

Restoration Comedy not only aimed at reflecting the audience but also their lifestyles, which is why most plays concern themselves with Londoners of a single class – the aristocracy and their attendants and servants and why most Restoration Comedy stages are set in London, the seat of the crown and the central hub of commerce, culture and fashion at the time. (Morrah 80) The setting of *The Man of Mode* for example, was described by Etherege’s contemporaries as a “naturalistic representation of London life in the 1670s”. (Kachur 96)

It was not until the advent of Restoration comedy that characters were drawn from the aristocracy and nobility and mocking “the socially élite rather than characters from the lower classes“, (Van der Weele 8) which is why the essential ingredients are “wit, urbanity and sophistication” and recurrent themes build almost exclusively around wit, love, sexual intrigue and cuckoldry. (Morrah 80)

Both *The Way of the World* and *The Country Wife* and well as *The Man of Mode* are set in London and whereas most scenes take place in the characters’ lodgings – some scenes are also set in coffee houses, parks or just the streets of London. The only exception is *The Beaux’ Stratagem,* which, firstly, is set in Lichfield, a village in the English countryside, and secondly with all scenes taking place in either the village inn or Lady Bountiful’s house.

3.3.3 Plot Construction

Restoration Comedy plots always focus on a central group of characters, both men and women and their sexual escapades as for example Sir Dorimant in *The Man of Mode*, a man about town, who dupes women into believing that he loves them and uses and abuses their readiness to yield to him. (Wilkinson 118) Or Horner in *The Country Wife,* so husbands would no longer feel threatened by him and leave their wives with him unattended, he has his servant Quack spread word around town that Horner is a eunuch ("I have undone you forever with the women, and reported you through the whole town as bad as an eunuch [...]" (Quack, *CW* I.i.4-6))

According to Berkowitz, all the plays are about sex "but almost no one in the plays is sexual." (72) In fact, the clever young people's emphasis is on the intrigue rather than the physical sexual gratification and "most of the gallants (…) primary motivation seems to be the pleasure of the hunt rather than the trophy of victory." Examples include Horner in *The Country Wife* for example, who gains pleasure from chasing and seducing women, but who does not attach great importance to whether or not the cuckolded husbands Mr. Pinchwife and Sir Jasper find him out; what is important to Horner is the feeling of sexual power that he holds over the other members of society, both men and women. (Nägerl 56) Another example would be Archer in *The Beaux' Stratagem* who rejects both Cherry's (sexual) advances as well as Dorinda's hand in marriage and chooses to claim Dorinda's money instead.

Only the comic characters or those that do not have the (self-monitoring) abilities to disguise their desire seem to openly express their sexuality. (Berkowitz 72) Overt physical desire is not only expressed and ridiculed in actions but also in names of comic characters such as: Master Horner, who puts horns on the husbands and makes husband 'horn-mad' or Mr. Pinchwife who (not only verbally) abuses his wife as can be assumed form his name and who restricts her freedom out of fear of being cuckolded, Mrs. Squeamish who does not seem to be prudish or squeamish as we would falsely deduce from her name, and Lady Fidget who is indeed rather fidgety and restless to get some of Master Horner's 'famous china', all of which are characters in *The Country Wife.*

Mr. and Mrs. Fainall in *The Way of the World,* as the name suggest ‘feign all’ and Millamant has “a thousand lovers” (*WoW* II.i.360-363), Aimwell, Archer and Bonniface in *The Beaux’ Stratagem* – Aimwell is the marksman, Archer the executive power and together they plot to find a rich country woman:

> ARCHER
> […] but instead if riveting your eyes to a beauty, try to fix ‘em upon a fortune, that’s our business at present.
> AIMWELL
> Pshaw, no woman can be a beauty without a fortune. – Let me alone, for I am a marksman. (*BS* II.ii.35-39)

And Bonniface who does not ‚do good’ as his Latin name would suggest by trying to persuade his daughter into prostituting herself.

> BONNIFACE
> [...] The gentleman’s servant loves to drink, I’ll ply him that way, and then to one loves a wench; you must work him t’other way.
> CHERRY
> Father, would you have me give my secret for his?
> BONNIFACE
> Consider, child, there’s two hundred pound to boot. (*BS* I.i.278-286)

And last but not least Mrs. Loveit, who just loves her affair with Dorimant too much to being able to give him up:

> I know he is a devil, but he has something of the angel yet undefaced in him, which makes him so charming and agreeable that I must love him, be he never so wicked. (*MoM*, II.ii. p. 69)

The sexual game, seduction, pursuit, conquest, betrayal and enjoyment are the central facts of the plays and so are the characters involved in these seduction plots and sexual affairs, betrayals and conquests, whereas the notions of romantic love and marriage are being mocked and rejected. (Van der Weele 9) Horner in *The Country Wife* for example mocks the concept of marriage by saying that

> [...] a marriage vow is like a penitent gamester’s oath and entering into bonds and penalties to stint himself to such a particular small sum at play for the future, which makes him but the more eager, and not being able to hold out, loses his money again and his forfeit to boot”. (*CW*, I.i. 391-396)

He even mocks Pinchwife’s marriage, saying that Pinchwife just wants to keep a whore to himself:

> HORNER
> (…) Is not keeping better than marriage?
> Pinchwife
> (…) I could never keep a whore to myself.
> HORNER
> So, then, you only married to keep a whore to yourself. (I.i.405-409)

Even though the plays are seriously undercut by satire and irony, it is important to understand that the playwrights still wished to be taken seriously and often referred to the exact opposite of what they were saying to personally attack pretense and insincerity. (Van der Weele 12f) They ridicule their current generation, not the past or present, by wittily displaying and challenging the current moral codes. (Miles 110) Wycherley for example actually criticizes the affectation and hypocrisy practiced at the time, through the character of Horner. (Van der Weele 383) Horner discloses for example, that women only reject adultery in appearance in their concern for their reputation, but in reality ”(...) ’tis scandal they would avoid, not men.” (I.i. 144-145).

Restoration Comedy plots are subordinate to dialogue, which is of utmost importance and sometimes not given sufficient attention. The dialogues are very demanding, so are the roles and characters. The language is frank, often blunt, but “accepted as part of the playwright’s craft” (Van der Weele 11) as it helps establish a comic effect where “conversation takes precedence over action”. (Van der Weele 13) As for example in *The Way of the World*, it becomes almost impossible to coherently recount the plot, but the action, the intrigues, counter-intrigues, disguise, mistaken identities etc. are not the prime concern. It is the combination of events and observation of society expressed through a satirical voice, the emphasis on the raillery, the contest of wit that is typical for Restoration plays and makes for their fascination. (Van der Weele 10)

Ashley H. Thorndike put the matter as follows:

> Comedy, more perhaps than any other branch of literature, must attend to the moment, to its customs, its fashions, its idiom […] (587)

Wit was a desired trait during the seventeenth century, a sign of good breeding, a social achievement and therefore a requirement for admission to cultured society, which is why authors so frequently expressed their point of view on life and life’s purposes through the medium of wit. It was the very quintessence of

the Restoration period and therefore Restoration Comedy of course, as it permitted directness, playfulness, mock and rail and still no one would object to indecency since “sexual appetite disguised as commerce, gambling, exploration or hunting is safer and easier to deal with comically” (Berkowitz 71) – something which can still be observed today.

3.4 Topics and Themes

Important recurring topics in Restoration comedies that deserve further analysis and attention include but are not limited to:

1. Sexual relations, both in and out of marriage and the overall status of women during the Restoration period.

2. Restoration Comedy aiming at holding up a mirror to seventeenth century society and ridiculing the hypocrisy and double standard of the time.

3. The concepts of females disguising as males like Margery in *The Country Wife* who pretends to be her brother, or women masquerading to hide their true identity behind (vizard) masks or fans, are both omnipresent in Restoration Comedy and lead to mistaken identities with rather strong comic effects. (Hume 137)

4. Social dichotomies such as old characters versus young characters, the country and the city, men versus women, virtuous characters versus immoral characters, prudes versus coquettes and Truewits versus Witwouds or fops.

But not only the themes or topics are recurrent, the stereotypical characters are as well: rake heroes, young heroines, faithless wives and cuckolded husbands can be found in every Restoration Comedy of the time and they all add a different point of view to that unique social commentary. (Krutch 2)

3.4.1 Marriage and a Woman’s Status

Over the course of many centuries any occupation and educational options available to women, who were regarded as incapable creatures, varied according to her socio-economic status. Considered less intelligent than men,

women were denied the formal education that men received and the little education they received at home they received through the help of governesses or other servants. (Vrablitz 13) Since it was widely believed that a woman's vocation was in marriage, in becoming a wife and mother, it is not surprising that women were only trained in domestic skills or skills that would make her (more) suitable for marriage. (Rubik 3)

Unlike today where most couples decide to get married for personal and emotional reasons, the men and women during the Restoration were often not that lucky. Most people had to get married for socioeconomic or financial reasons: marriage was an easy means for a woman to change her status and advance on the social ladder so many women were forced into unhappy marriages to secure their social status or their financial situation. (Macfarlane 149-150)

Marriage was then considered a social contract in which a woman had to hand over her independence and all the authority she had over to her husband – over the household, her money, the children, servants etc. Women could not own property and the dowry, any inheritance, wages, property or goods she owned prior to getting married automatically fell to her husband after the ceremony. (Gagen 13) Women had to obey their husbands, be chaste and under all circumstances – preserve their honor. (Foyster 65 ff)

As mentioned earlier, Shoemaker (72 ff) points out that the sexual double standard of the time frequently resulted in the acceptance of men's extra-marital affairs, whereas any sexual misconduct of women was openly disapproved of and often resulted in public condemnation and punishment such as public divorce. So women had to be careful in choosing their husbands, unhappy marriages were quite the norm at the time. (Macfarlane 166 ff)

According to Birdsall (35) legal separations and divorces were very costly and almost impossible to obtain, so Macfarlane argues that many women would have decided to stay in an unhappy marriage, since it guaranteed her financial support and allowed her access to her children; a privilege that separated or divorced women were denied. (Macfarlane 166 ff)

It is those marriages that Restoration Comedy ridicules, satirizes and condemns - marriages based on socioeconomic or other considerations, unhappy marriages, marriages tarnished by adultery and scheming. Hume (*Development* 29) claims that "social commentary is an altogether common phenomenon in these plays" and focusing on arranged marriages as a social problem is just another example of Restoration Comedy holding a mirror to the face of society.

3.4.2 Mirror to the Face of Society

The main goal of Restoration Comedies is to mock society or lift it up for scrutiny to the audience. In order to do that Restoration Comedy had to take great interest in what Restoration society took great interest in, namely manners and social rules, clothing, cosmetics, disguise and deception but most importantly – reputation. (Holland 57) And since reputation was always connected to (sexual) behavior, virtue and of course marriage, which, as the ultimate mirror of society, is depicted quite sarcastically and sinister. Even though the plays usually have a happy ending and the rake usually gets the woman, or at least that is the implication, many critiques of marriage are rather devastating and rebellious breaks with tradition: marriages without love or marriages that end in divorce, both is the case with Sullen and Mrs. Sullen in *The Beaux' Stratagem,* or betrayal for example, which is the case in Lady Fidget and Sir Jasper Fidget's marriage in *The Country Wife.*

Witty Restoration playwrights therefore used their play-world characters to reflect upon "the[se] real world's ideas and conventions, […] condemn […] some of the injustices and weaknesses of that world and offer […] alternative modes of social conduct […]" and tried to amuse the audience and challenge the notorious 'wits' of the age by doing so. (Young 1)

And dramatists not only amused the audience by satirizing the fashionable manners of the time through witty conversations between the characters, they also included bawdy language and displayed indecent sexual behavior, to amuse the audience as well as satirize the sexual behavior of the age. The Restoration play-world was a world of appearances and, like the real world it

mirrored, “composed of good manners and fine talk at the expense of any expression of true feelings or natural desires.” (Young 1)

Rubik (17) compares the libertinism and sexual freedom displayed in Restoration Comedy as direct response to Puritanism of the Commonwealth. While the gentry and aristocratic men enjoyed their sexual freedom, women on the other hand where still subjected to a sexual double standard that required a good reputation through chastity and virtuous behavior.

Muir argues that dramatists and/or Restoration society were not so scandalously immoral as they have been painted: while it is true, that the plays mirror reality and not an imaginary world, dramatists only wished to satirize the sexual behavior of the time: “a dramatist who wishes to satirize the sexual behaviour of his age is bound to be indecent. The more moral he is, the more indecent he will be.” The ‘China Scene’ in Wycherley’s *The Country Wife* is both outrageously indecent as well as funny. But moreover, it is moral in its effect, as it brilliantly exemplifies Lady Fidget and Mrs. Squeamish’s hypocrisy and immorality. (Muir 20 ff)

3.4.3 Disguises & Masquerades

During the Restoration, disguise and masquerade were a big part of the high-society’s festive celebrations, as well as of their day-to-day dealings: on the surface level, fans, masks and embellishments were used “to hide the true expression on their faces behind (it)”; and to cover up what lies beyond the exterior, people would “dress up their real thoughts and feelings in polite trifling and elegant gesture.” (Salgādo 18f). Fops would hide their inner nature and real thoughts behind a mask of manners and fashionable clothes whereas the ladies would – literally – hide behind a their fans and (vizard) masks.

Schofield (10) in his study *Masking and Unmasking the Female Mind* establishes that women have always been masked and have had to hide behind „the mask of the disguised romance heroine“. The disguise permits the heroine to be herself, to be the self she chooses to be and not the self society and society’s restrictions and expectations expect her to be. It permits her to experience „a self other than her own real self.“ (Schofield 26)

But since behavioral signs were considered unreliable as they could easily be manipulated, controlled or misinterpreted, men would try and interpret female bodily signs such as blushing, eye movements, sweating, etc. (Nägerl 91ff)

Women had to be very mindful of both their behavior and appearance, as it was believed that both could be indicators to a woman's identity – social or spiritual. But identity could easily be hidden or falsified if measured by behavior – a person only had to act accordingly. An example of the unreliability of behavioral signs is Lady Fidget and Horner's relationship in *The Country Wife,* which make use of the superficiality of Restoration society. By constantly claiming their honor in a very exaggerated way Lady Fidget tries to convince Horner to be careful with her reputation to keep her extramarital affair(s) a secret. (Pritchard 37 f)

> LADY FIDGET
> Well Horner, am not I a woman of honour? You see I'm as good as my world.
> HORNER
> And you shall see madam, I'll not be behind hand with you in honour; and I'll be as good as my word too, if you please but to withdraw into the next room.
> LADY FIDGET
> But first, my dear sir, you must promise to have a care of my dear honour.
> HORNER
> If you talk a word more of your honour, you'll make me incapable to wrong it; to talk of honour in the mysteries of love, is like talking of Heaven, or the Deity in an operation of witchcraft, just when you are emplying the devil, it makes the charm impotent. [...] (*CW* IV.iii. p. 219)

But it was no secret that behavior could be faked; therefore women were under constant examination by patriarchal Restoration society. Pritchard however points out that women could and often would hide their identities behind a mask, so that there would be no obvious difference between their appearance and their identity, something most men dreaded. A rare example of a man actually encouraging a woman to hide her true inner feelings is Fainall in *The Way of the World* encouraging Mrs. Marwood to hide her tears: „[…] Hide your face, your tears! You have a mask, wear it a moment." (*WoW* II.i.220-221)

Naturally, women were encouraged to be totally self-evident in their behavior "so as to help men comprehend a woman's character – by examining her exterior." Blushing quickly came to be considered an important sign of honor that could reveal a virtuous and innocent character as it was an unintentional action, as well as the eyes that were commonly understood to be incorruptible and therefore of utmost significance in trying to 'unmask' a woman. (Pritchard 41)

As a result, women quickly resorted to means of disguising bodily signs to hide true feelings and identities such as face-painting for example, or (vizard) masks, which were meant for especially shy women, too shy to expose their face in public, and not for women trying to hide their true identity. And over the course of time, vizard masks "became a symbol for corrupted and false women and the true meaning of the vizard mask was lost." (Nägerl 94)

A perfect example of a character manipulating and controlling her behavior to her own advantage is also Lady Fidget in *The Country Wife*, who is trying to hide her true identity behind a mask when her husband Mr. Pinchwife surprises her in Horner's lodgings:

> LADY FIDGET
> O Lord here's a man, Sir Jasper, my Mask, my Mask, I would not be seen here for the world.
> SIR JASPER
> What not when I am with you?
> LADY FIDGET
> No, no my honour – let's be gone.
> SQUEAMISH
> Oh Grandmother, let us be gone, make hast, make hast, I know not how he may censure us.
> LADY FIDGET
> Be found in the lodging of any thing like a man, away. (*CW* IV.iii. p. 225)

During the masquerade Lady Fidget and the virtuous gang give at Horner's lodgings, the ladies throw off their masks and perform songs, revealing their innermost secrets about their unmet sexual needs and their loveless marriages:

> MRS DAINTY FIDGET
> Dear brimmer! Well, in token of our openness and plain dealing, let us throw our masks over our heads.
> HORNER
> So 'twill come to the glasses anon.

LADY SQUEAMISH
Lovely brimmer, let me enjoy him first.
LADY FIDGET
No, I never part with a gallant, till I've tried him. Dear brimmer that makest our husbands short sighted.
MRS DAINTY FIDGET
And our bashful gallants bold.
LADY SQUEAMISH
And for want of a gallant, the butler lovely in our eyes, drink eunuch.
LADY FIDGET
Drink thou representative of a husband. Damn a husband!
MRS DAINTY FIDGET
And, as it were a husband, an old keeper.
LADY SQUEAMISH
And an old Grandmother.
HORNER
And an English bawd, and a French chirurgeon. (*CW* V.iv. p. 244)

Overlap between behavioral signs and bodily signs exists of course, for example clothes were an important means of distinguishing oneself from the masses but also an important and easy means of disguise. While Restoration society believed that clothes could compromise bodily authenticity – vizard masks could cover the eyes, big dresses hide body contours, flushed cheeks could be concealed behind a fan etc. people still believed that one could tell a person's character from their clothes, something that is particularly true for the portrayal of many fops: with their inadequate artificial behavior paired with exaggerated and overly fancy, stylish French clothing the fop surely becomes the object of ridicule. (Pritchard 40)

That does not mean however that disguise was totally frowned upon – women with integrity were only allowed to be seen in playhouses, coffee houses, markets or dancing schools if their appearance was appropriate, meaning "if their physical appearance assured honesty and integrity". (Pritchard 33) Disguise proves to be both a protective device against the harassment of the fop or rake-hero and a means of fooling and controlling him, a cuckolded husband or even society as a whole.

It is the act of unmasking, the uncovering of the masquerade that reveals a strong woman, that, unlike the other female characters, is not submissive and weak and still hiding behind her (literal) masks. (Schofield 188 ff)

3.4.4 Dichotomies

Common dichotomies in Restoration Comedy not only include the obvious binary opposition between men and women, men being portrayed as witty, worldly, dominant seducers and women as naïve, innocent Witwouds, uneducated birds in golden cages that men prey on, but also the distinctions country vs. city, old vs. young, Truewits vs. Witwouds, rich vs. poor and moral vs. immoral to name only the few very important and blatant dichotomies.

The country and the city are both opposite play settings as well as references to character traits: London, as the center of the Restoration universe – "O London, London!" (Archer, *BS* I.i.177) whereas the country is usually referred to as boring and dull and lacking amusement:

> MILLAMANT
> I nauseate walking, 'tis a country diversion. I loathe the country and everything that relates to it. (*WoW* IV.i.100-101, p. 79)

The dichotomy is often depicted in the type of the fop, who is very often a rich country simpleton. Overwhelmed by the fashions of the city he tries hard to fit in, often too hard which leaves him the subject of ridicule, just like Witwoud in *The Way of the World:*

> WITWOUD
> [...] I tell you 'tis not modish to know relations in town. You think you're in the country [...]. 'Tis not the fashion here, 'tis not indeed, dear brother.
> SIR WILFULL
> The fashion's a fool, and you're a fop, dear brother. […] (*WoW* III.i.460-472)

Everything connected to the country "is felt to be something negative" (Vrablitz 59); even country people are described in rather derogative terms and often referred to as 'country bumpkins' or 'country innocents' by the town-people who feel that country people lack fashion, elegance and sophistication:

> HORNER
> What! I see a little time in the country makes a man turn wild and unsociable, and only fit to converse with his horses, dogs, and his herds. (*CW*, III.ii. p. 200)

Londoners on the other hand are usually described as worldly, witty, sophisticated and elegant people, fond of fashion, coffee-houses and going to theatres; in other words: they are spoiled and they look down on the so-called "pleasures" the country has to offer, as can be seen here by Mrs. Sullen's outburst in Farquhar's *The Beaux' Stratagem*: (Vrablitz 59)

> DORINDA
> You share in all the pleasures that the country affords.
> MRS SULLEN
> Country pleasures! Racks and torments! Dost think, child, that my limbs were made for leaping of ditches, and clambering over stiles; or that my parents, wisely foreseeing my future happiness in country pleasures, had early instructed me in the rural accomplishments of drinking fat ale, playing at whisk, and smoking tobacco with my husband; or of spreading of plasters, brewing of diet-drinks, and stilling rosemary water, with the good old gentlewoman, my mother-in-law? (*BS* II.i.13-31)

In Etherege's *The Man of Mode,* Lady Townley and Lady Woodville, two very strong female characters due to their influence on the heroine, Harriet, are completely opposite characters – and their names already suggest that: Townley is from the city, London to be exact, Woodville on the other hand is from the country. Together they provide Harriet with all their knowledge and wisdom so as to find the suitable husband: Woodville is very old-fashioned and maybe a bit boring; she is very careful and protective of Harriet and does not want her to be in the company of a rake; Townley, very worldly and familiar with wits and fools, understands the tone of the time and is familiar with the concepts of wit and foppery. (Tippets 44)

Characters can and sometimes even must be differentiated also on the basis of their wit: Ramczyk (15) defines Witwouds or fops as false wits, "poor unfortunates who can only aspire to true wit and manners", such as Sparkish, to whom "a wit [...] is the greatest title in the world." (*CW* I.i.285)

Witwouds, so Ramczyk, lack the ability to improvise in new situations, whereas Truewits are more socially adept and also more inventive or successful in finding solutions to problems. To Fujimura (392), the Witwouds or witlesses are stupid, mere pretenders to wit, whereas Truewits enjoy "intellectual superiority of perception and knowledge". The Truewits' intellectual superiority and striking means of expression through witty dialogue and "[…] malicious laughter

directed at fools" add to the enjoyment of Restoration Comedies. (Fujimura 394-395)

Dorimant, Medley and Harriet from *The Man of Mode* and Horner and Alithea from *The Country Wife* truly are notable examples of Truewits, so is Millamant; although one of *The Way of the World*'s rather malicious characters, she possesses all the „many attractive qualities" Van der Weele ascribes to Truewits: they admire truth and honesty, they are cultivated, often good-natured and believe in the proper use of intelligence – to expose fools, knaves, and pretenders, and to give pleasure to himself and others, rather than to further his own material interests." (Van der Weele 404)

On the other hand we have "the affected coxcomb, the superannuated coquette, the lecherous old man, and the lustful woman who affects virtue", all of them examples of Witwouds and witlesses, so Fujimura (394), such as Fainall and Witwoud, as his name already suggests, in *The Way of the World*, Sullen in *The Beaux' Stratagem,* Sir Fopling Flutter in *The Man of Mode and The Country Wife's* Sparkish, who appreciates wit and thinks it "as necessary at dinner as a glass of good wine", unfortunately does not have wit, and that's the reason why he „never [has] any stomach when [he eats] alone." (*CW* I.i. p. 162) Sir Jasper Fidget does not even qualify as a Witwoud; he is the Witless.

All plays distinguish between characters that display true wit and characters that do not and Congreve's *The Way of the World* for example, is solely based on the mere distinction between true and false wit, but attention must be paid to all kinds of dichotomies, not only the distinction of wit. Age differences, gender relations, wit, settings and their allusions to character traits, they all must be kept in mind before the reader or the audience can fully appreciate the comedies and their unique stock characters. (Fujimura 13)

3.5 Recurrent types or Stock Characters

Restoration Comedies show a variety of recurrent types or stock characters, for example the beau or rake-hero, the fop, the heroine, the adulterous wife, the cuckolded husband and the jealous mistress. Restoration Comedy was a world of appearances, so the characters often revealed but little complexity, since

most playwrights followed traditional stereotypes adapted from medieval satires making their characters neither overly exaggerated nor critical. (McDonald 10) Typically, Restoration Comedy is artificial comedy suitable for the high society and the characters, accepted as a part of the contemporary scene, the real world it mirrored and tried to ridicule. (Singh 192 ff)

The most common stock characters are:

3.5.1 The Beau, Rake or Rake-hero

The traditional beau also referred to as the rake(-hero) can be easily discerned by his actions and overall behavior: although the rake-hero is not easily defined as he is not a single type, characteristically he is equal to the heroine and the rival of the fops and humor-butts.

As a self-confident, educated, witty, seductive and communicative man about town the typical rake is fancied by all wives and therefore feared by all husbands, as he enjoys his sexual freedom openly and pursues women not for love but for sexual pleasure. (Gill *Interpreting Ladies* 195) Every rake's life is "one of pure romance and pleasure" and wit, pranks, gallantry and love all have their share in it. (Vrablitz 62) But not every rake is automatically a rake-hero: opinions are deeply divided on the issue as to whether or not the term 'rake-hero' is appropriate since most rake-heroes are not the heroes one would expect. (Hume 48)

Horner in *The Country Wife* for example is the witty male lead character and with his disguises, scheming and sexual relations he is the epitome of a rake. But by tricking men into believing he was "a man unfit for women" (*CW* I.i. p.154) and then cuckolding them, Horner cannot be called a hero, but is a "villain": (Gill 56)

> HORNER
> [aside]: Now must I wrong one woman for another's sake, but that's no new thing with me; for in these cases ***I am still on the criminal's side, against the innocent***. (*CW V.iv.* p. 250*) (emphasis added)*

Nevertheless, the audience sides with him rather than with the cuckolded husbands, even though his scheming and cuckolding plots are morally

questionable, simply because Horner has wit and because he is not a loathsome character unlike the hypocritical Lady Fidget and her virtuous gang. Horner may not be an admirable Truewit, but he is a Truewit nonetheless, first of all for thinking that a woman who lacks wit is not agreeable, as "wit is more necessary than beauty" (*CW* I.i. p. 165) and also for setting up and executing his little scheme: pretending to be a eunuch, gives Horner the privileges of one and allows him to sleep with the wives of his choice:

> HORNER
> [...] ***I have, by the reputation of an eunuch, the privileges of one***; and be seen in a lady's chamber in a morning as early as her husband; kiss virgins before their parents or lovers; and may be in short the passe partout of the town. [...] (CW I.i. p. 158) (emphasis added)

But Horner's opinion of women in general, and not only of Lady Fidget and her virtuous gang, is rather low, thinking them weak, difficult, diseased and unfaithful, as he points out in a metaphor to Sir Jasper Fidget:

> SIR JASPER
> Come, come, man. What, avoid the sweet society of woman-kind? That sweet, soft, gentle, tame, noble creature woman, made for man's companion?
> HORNER
> So is that soft, gentle, tame, and more noble creature a spaniel, and has all their tricks; can fawn, lie down, suffer beating, and fawn the more; barks at your friends when they come to see you, makes your bed hard, gives you fleas, and the mange sometimes. And all the difference is, the spaniel's the more faithful animal, and fawns but upon one master. (CW II.i. p. 181)

It is interesting that to Horner all women are like spaniels that "suffer beating, and fawn the more" when it is in fact not the women in the play that are being used, debased and mistreated but it is Horner, who is being used as a sex object by Lady Fidget and the gang.

Horner's role-playing and impression management is impeccable: except for the few people that are a part of his little scheme, none of the other characters suspect Horner could only be faking his 'condition' or doubt him. He may not be equal to the heroine, but he is not a villain either; we could say he is a rake acting like a 'hero' by letting the audience learn about his plots and motivations right at the beginning of the play. Also by ridiculing the jealous fops and the hypocritical closet libertines that are deserving of exposure, Horner reveals

some of his true inner nature. (Hume 48) (Van der Weele 400)

Frank Harcourt is, like Horner, also not a typical rake-hero. As Horner's good-natured rakish friend, Harcourt falls in love with the meritorious Alithea and is converted throughout the course of the play from a witty rake who enjoys his sexual freedom openly to a rake-reformed who has honorable intentions and views of marriage based on mutual love.

But Harcourt's intentions are only good and honorable in regards to Alithea: Harcourt is a very high self-monitoring character that manages to play the role of Sparkish's friend so convincingly, that Sparkish does not suspect Harcourt's rivalry and betrayal. And while Sparkish is certain of Alithea's virtue and love, Harcourt uses Sparkish's trust and friendship to steal Alithea right under Sparkish's nose:

> HARCOURT
> [aside]: So, we are hard put to't when we make our rival our procurer. [...] all's done, a rival is the best cloak to steal a mistress under, without suspicion; and when we have once got to her as we desire, we throw him off like other cloaks. (*CW* III.ii. p. 194)

But since both Harcourt's courtship of Alithea is an example of a true reformation process of a rakish womanizer to an honorable suitor as well as their relationship a representation of true love based on mutual trust and esteem, the audience sides with him and gives him and Alithea their blessing.

A true example of a rake-hero who obviously cannot be reformed is Dorimant in *The Man of Mode,* an infamous London rake who casts aside his mistress Mrs. Loveit to pursue her naïve, young friend Belinda, then deserts Belinda also to win Harriet, the heroine of the play. (Bull 439)

Dorimant is an extravagant rake characterized by promiscuity, self-assurance, frivolity and vanity. His principles are libertine and he values intellectual distinction above anything else. (Fujimura 106) Like Horner, Dorimant possesses superior intellect and nonchalant gentility, which makes him capable of playful, fanciful wit superior to the other characters (except the heroine). Since his main concern in life is "the pursuit of pleasure", he is often mistaken for a cruel, selfish rake, when in fact he is a Truewit and a true comic figure, not

a comic fool. (Van der Weele 395)

Dorimant's sentiments range from witty, cynical and sarcastic to raillery, depending on the social context he finds himself in. A striking example of his malicious raillery and wit is with Mrs. Loveit, his cast mistress:

> MRS LOVEIT
> Is this the constancy you vowed?
> DORIMANT
> Constancy at my years! 'Tis not a virtue in season; you might as well expect the fruit the autumn ripens i'the spring.
> MRS LOVEIT
> Monstrous principle!
> DORIMANT
> Youth has a long journey to go, madam. Should I have set up my rest at the first inn I lodged at, I should never have arrived at the happiness I now enjoy.
> MRS LOVEIT
> Dissembler, damned dissembler!
> DORIMANT
> I am so, I confess; good nature and good manners corrupt me. I am honest with my inclinations, and would not, wer't not to avoid offence, make a lady a little in years believe I think her young, wilfully mistake art for nature, and seem as fond of a thing I am weary of, as when I doted on't in earnest. (*MoM* II.ii. p. 74)

With Mrs. Loveit and Belinda Dorimant only seems to have his reputation as a rake and lover in mind, with Harriet on the other hand, Dorimant truly seems to have fallen in love with as he is worried that she could turn him down or hurt him as the audience learns in this aside:

> DORIMANT
> [aside]: I love her, and dare not let her know it. I fear sh'as an ascendant o'er me and may revenge the wrongs I have done her sex. [...] (*MoM* V.i. p. 107)

But whether or not Dorimant can be categorized as a rake-reformed at the end of the play is still debatable: some critics argue that "[c]omedy in which a libertine protagonist is left unmarried are quite rare" (Vrablitz 64), so it can be assumed that Dorimant is indeed "[…] tamed and brought to heel […]". (Vrablitz 67-68) Yet it is still unsure whether Dorimant's vows and professions of love and change can and should be trusted as Dorimant hurries away after having confessed his love of Harriet to the audience, to meet with Belinda, choosing his sexual pleasures over his proclaimed love to Harriet:

> DORIMANT
> [aside]: The hour is almost come, I appointed Belinda, and I am not so foppishly in love here to forget; I am flesh and blood yet. (*MoM* IV.i. p. 112)

Dorimant is a brilliant actor making both Mrs. Loveit and Belinda believe that he is in love with them. It so happens during a heated conversation with Loveit at the beginning of the play, that Dorimant admits to not having been truthful to Mrs. Loveit:

> MRS LOVEIT
> Now you begin to show yourself!
> DORIMANT
> Love gilds us over, and makes us show fine things to one another for a time, but ***soon the gold wears off and then again the native brass appears***. (*MoM* II.ii. p. 74-75) (emphasis added)

From admitting that he has been wearing a mask so to speak and not shown his real face, his true inner nature to Mrs. Loveit without Mrs. Loveit taking notice, we can assume that Dorimant is used to acting out roles to make women fall for him. From his explanation for breaking his vows to Loveit, that „in love there is no security given for the future“ and all his oaths, vows and protestations were only „a certain proof of a present passion“ it can assumed that Dorimant has only been telling Mrs. Loveit whatever it was she wanted to hear from him to convince her to give herself to him. (*MoM* II.ii. p.75) We see Dorimant again at the end of the play trying to explain to both Mrs. Loveit and Belinda, telling them that Harriet is only a woman to “repair the ruins of [his] estate” and both women seem to believe him yet again. Dorimant goes on telling Mrs. Loveit that if she had been “a reasonable woman”, he might have been able to secure both his interest – the repairing of the ruins of his estate through marrying Harriet as well as securing Mrs. Loveit’s love. And not only does Dorimant reveal his failed plot of keeping Mrs. Loveit as his mistress after the marriage with Harriet, he also expresses his wish in continuing his relationship with Belinda: “[...] When I see you next – “ (*MoM* V.ii. p.140)

From Dorimant’s behavior as well as his rather telling French name – “lover of gold” – we are led to assume that Dorimant is a rake that cannot be reformed: his views of marriage are not based on love and trust, instead he compares marriage to falling into a trap used for capturing wild animals. Other than Bellair

who has decided to marry for love, Dorimant declares he might fall into the 'trap' all the same, albeit for different reasons than Bellair – motivated by socioeconomic consideration:

> YOUNG BELLAIR
> You had not best think of Mrs Harriet too much; without church security there's no taking up there.
> DORIMANT
> I may fall into the snare too. But-
> The wise will find a difference in our fate,
> You wed a woman, I a good estate. (*MoM* IV.iii. p. 121)

Dorimant is a true high self-monitoring character, good at manipulating impressions people have of him, after having monitored, assessed and evaluated others and collected information so he can adjust his behavior accordingly and use his knowledge for his own intrigues. Harriet is also a high self-monitoring character and she and Dorimant, like all heroes and heroines, do not only watch their own behavior, but they also observe each other to assess and evaluate each other:

> DORIMANT
> [...] I know y'are greedy of the praises of the whole Mall.
> HARRIET
> You do me wrong.
> DORIMANT
> I do not; as I followed you, I observed how you were pleased when the fops cried *She's handsome, very handsome, by God she is,* and whispered aloud your name. The thousand several forms you put your face into then, to make yourself more agreeable! How wantonly you played with your head, flung back your locks, and looked smilingly over your shoulder at'em!
> HARRIET
> I do not go begging the men's as you do the ladies' good linking, with a sly softness in your looks and a gentle slowness in your bows as you pass by'em – as thus, sir [*acts him*]. Is not this like you? (*MoM* III.iii. p. 94-95)

But even Dorimant, who, according to Kachur (105), is the "supreme masquerader", does not seem to be immune to little cracks appearing in his social mask when pained by feelings of jealousy and unease: upon spotting Mrs. Loveit's affectionate intimacy with Sir Fopling Flutter, Medley notices a change in his friend's expression: "Dorimant, you look a little bashful on the

matter!" (*MoM* III.iii. p. 100) We are left to wonder why Medley manages to read Dorimant's expressions so accurately and Belinda does not ("I have watched his look, and find no alteration there. "Did he love her, some signs of jealousy would have appeared" (*MoM* III.iii. p. 101) but we can assume that it is probably the two rakes' close relationship that lets them look behind each other's mask as well as the fact that Dorimant is well aware that Belinda is watching his expression for slips of his mask. But this again is an example of the great difficulty in telling apart characters' masks and disguises from their inner nature – we are left to wonder and speculate.

Unlike Belinda who seems to be having difficulties reading Dorimant, Harriet is the better judge of character, instantly unmasking Dorimant as a womanizer with a sharp tongue "so famed for falsehood 'twill do the truth an injury". (*MoM* V.ii. p. 135) Still Harriet as well as Belinda and Mrs. Loveit give in to his vows, professions and promises, because Dorimant manages to simulate sentiments so convincingly throughout the play. With ease, versatility and perspicacity, Dorimant manages to "please anyone when, and if, he wishes to do so", so Fujimura. (107)

Dorimant's friend and admirer, Young Harry Bellair's father, Old Bellair, is an old, extravagant foppish rake who, like his son, is also in love with young Emilia but unaware that she is already married to Young Bellair. Old Bellair, is neither a rake-hero, nor a Truewit nor a high self-monitoring character and seems to be quite ignorant and unaware of what is going on around him – that Emilia is already married to his son for example – suggesting he has bad observation skills, which again point towards very low self-monitoring skills. Even if he is not very apt at hiding his own feelings, he is very apt at reading other characters' emotions, such as Emilia's inner feelings, when telling his sister to tell Emilia to look a little bit more pleased in his presence: "Advise her to wear a little more mirth in her face, a-dod she´s too serious". (*MoM* II.i. p. 65)

The other characters do not seem to have any difficulties reading Old Bellair's true inner feelings for Emilia either, even though he is trying to hide it, which is also evidence that he is on no account a high self-monitoring character and not adept at controlling his emotions:

> LADY TOWNLEY
> How do you like Emilia's dancing, brother?
> OLD BELLAIR
> Not at all! Not at all!
> LADY TOWNLEY
> You speak not what you think, I am sure.
> OLD BELLAIR
> No matter for that, go, bid her dance no more, it don't become her, it don't become her, tell her I say so. [...] (*MoM* IV.i. p. 103)

It is due to his lack of adequate self-display that Old Bellair falls victim to ridicule, as well as his lust for a younger woman which is unfitting for an old man like him.

A rake-hero who unlike Old Bellair has mastered the art of impression management and adequate self-display is introduced in *The Way of the World*: Mirabell, who has engineered a marriage between Mrs. Fainall and Mr. Fainall to hide the fact that he has had an affair with Mrs. Fainall to protect her reputation and who finds himself madly in love with Millamant, Mrs. Fainall's niece. But to wed Millamant, Mirabell has to contrive a scheme to win her aunt's approval, Lady Wishfort, who hates Mirabell ever since she misinterpreted his flattery for love.

Mirabell appears to be acting out the role of a typical Restoration rake in the beginning but throughout the play Mirabell establishes himself as the epitome of a rake-hero-reformed and Truewit. Mirabell manages to convince both the audience as well as Millamant and the other characters that he is no longer interested in living a rakish lifestyle but that his love for Millamant is genuine and his intentions towards her are honorable. An example of this would be when Fainall, the Witwoud of the play, brings up Millamant during a conversation, remarking that she is both agreeable and witty. Through Mirabell's sensible and affectionate response the audience learns that Mirabell has indeed true, warm feelings for the heroine, saying that „[s]he has beauty enough to make any man think so, and complaisance enough not to contradict him who shall tell her so." (Mirabell, *WoW* I.i.137-138)

Typical for a Witwoud, Fainall does not seem to understand Mirabell's intentions with Millamant and keeps deflecting the conversation but Mirabell, who does not engage in repartee because he is too elegant, too introspective and detached,

is now encouraged to explain his true intentions. (Van der Weele 406) He declares his love for her and expresses his generous, affectionate spirit, saying that he likes Millamant with all her faults, "[...] nay, like[s] her for her faults." (*WoW* I.i.142-143)

Mirabell never falls from his role as a good natured, elegant beau with honorable intentions for Millamant, proving himself a high self-monitoring character. He also proves a good judge of character and good at reading and interpreting other character's role-play, especially Fainall and most importantly Millamant, who even though she is trying hard, is unable to hide her true feelings from him.

In *The Beaux' Stratagem,* the beaus Aimwell and Archer are also well adept at reading and interpreting other character's role-play. Having spent all their fortunes – or as Aimwell puts it "we can't say we have spent our fortunes, but that we have enjoyed'em" (*WoW* I.i.173-174), the two rakes leave for the country, pretending to be a rich lord and his servant. While Aimwell takes the role of Lord Aimwell from London, Archer has to play the role of Aimwell's footman. With their little scheme the two rakes are desperately trying to find rich heiresses to marry to replenish their funds.

Both their names, Archer and Aimwell, suggest archery and since they are both in pursuit of love and money, their names may refer to Archer helping Aimwell 'hit his target', or in other words, help Aimwell find a rich heiress to marry, and Aimwell has 'aimed well' enough as his name suggests and set his eye on Dorinda, the heroine of the play. Aimwell, over the course of the play „so moved by love for Dorinda that he can no longer deceive her", the rake becomes a figure of sentiment, revealing his true, good inner nature: (Blake xii)

> AIMWELL
> (*Aside)* Such goodness who could injure? ***I find myself unequal to the task of villain***. She has gained my soul, and made it honest like her own. – ***I cannot, cannot hurt her***. (*BS* V.iv.16-18) (emphasis added)

Having decided to admit that he is a fraud and does not have a title, „I'm all counterfeit, except my passion" (*BS* V.iv.22), Aimwell jeopardizes his budding romantic relationship with Belinda, his friendship with Archer as well as his reputation. Impressed by her suitor's honesty, Belinda accepts Aimwell for

himself and Aimwell, forsaking his rakish lifestyle and scheming, is turned into an admirable and devoted lover, a rake-reformed.

Archer, on the other hand, is far from being reformed: he is a true pleasure loving rake-villain who does not seem to be interested in honorable and mutually exclusive relationships with women (that are not motivated by lust or socioeconomic considerations) as can be deduced from his conversations with Aimwell, not his actions, as Archer is very adept at hiding his true motivations and emotions:

> ARCHER
> […] I love hunting, but would not, like Acteon, be eaten up by my own dogs; I love a fine house, but let another keep it; and just so I love a fine woman. (*BS* I.i.208-210)

Archer's overall motivations are very selfish and shallow, as he is only interested in replenishing his funds, something he won't ever let Aimwell forget:

> ARCHER
> […] instead if riveting your eyes to a beauty, try to fix 'em upon a fortune, that's our business at present. (*BS* II.ii.35-37)

> ARCHER
> Her face! Her pocket you mean […] (*BS* III.ii.10)

But Archer is not desperate enough to accept Cherry, the innkeeper's daughter's advances and refuses her, even though he is attracted to her at first, despite her young beauty and fortune of two thousand pounds. From his aside we can infer that Archer thinks himself superior to Cherry: he is happy socializing with her in his role as Martin the footman, a role which he learns to act out superbly over the course of the play, but as a noble squire Archer is too proud to marry her:

> ARCHER
> […] an innkeeper's daughter! Ay, that's the devil – there my pride brings me off. (*BS* II.ii.220-225)

After rebuking Cherry's advances, Archer then sets his mind to Mrs. Sullen, the unhappily married wife of Sullen, the local drunk. Again it can be discerned that his decision to pursue Mrs. Sullen is also not motivated by love but rather by both greed and lust, two very base motivations, making it the more obvious that Archer is not a hero-type. It is easy to assume that Archer is only acting out

different roles to arrive at his goals – sexual gratification and replenishing his funds, and not revealing his true inner nature to the other characters, except maybe to Aimwell:

> ARCHER
> [*Aside*] [...] I think, the wife has the greatest plenty of flesh and blood. She should be my choice. [...] (*BS* III.iii.105-106)

Both Aimwell and Archer appear to be high self-monitoring characters, as they manage to deceive each and every one of the other characters – even though Dorinda and Mrs. Sullen do suspect Archer to be of noble birth, but only Aimwell is capable of continuous and careful impression management. Even though Aimwell does not think it necessary for Archer to adjust his „style" according to the situation at first, it is Aimwell who does not fall from his role as Lord Aimwell, unlike Archer who seems to be having trouble adjusting at first:

> ARCHER
> I thank thee, my dear brother in iniquity.
> AIMWELL
> Iniquity! Prithee leave canting, ***you need not change your style with your dress.*** (*BS* I.i.115-117) (emphasis added)

As Aimwell's footman Archer is still only learning to fill his new social role and convince Bonniface and later Mrs. Sullen and Dorinda that he is indeed just a footman and not a highborn squire and Aimwell's friend. Archer indeed falls from his role as footman a couple of times at first, as speaking for his Lord Aimwell when he is not asked for example:

> AIMWELL
> Good, supper-meat, I must confess. – I can't eat beef, landlord.
> ARCHER
> ***And I hate pig***.
> AIMWELL
> Hold your prating, sirrah, ***do you know who you are***? (*BS* I.i.229-231) (emphasis added)

> AIMWELL
> Get me the rabbits fricasseed.
> BONNIFACE
> Fricasseed! Lard, sir, they'll eat much better smothered with onions.
> ARCHER
> ***Pshaw! Damn your onions!***
> AIMWELL
> ***Again, sirrah!*** – [...] (*BS* I.i.241-245) (emphasis added)

Whereas Cherry instantly knows Archer as a gentleman and not a footman „This fellow is as misbegotten as well as I. [...]“ (*BS* I.i.341-342), Mrs. Sullen and Dorinda take a little longer to uncover his true nature:

> DORINDA
> This is surprising. Did you ever see so pretty a well-bred fellow?
> MRS SULLEN
> The devil may take him for wearing that livery.
> DORINDA
> I fancy, sister, he may be some gentleman, a friend of my lord's, that his lordship has pitched upon for his courage, fidelity, and discretion to bear him company in this dress, and why, ten to one, was his second, too.
> MRS SULLEN
> It is so, it must be so, and it shall be so – for I like him. (*BS* III.iii 242-248)

Archer is successful, however, at simulating sentiments convincingly, as we can see with both Cherry and Mrs. Sullen who both fall for his charm, which is probably one of the few hints at his true inner nature: Archer is a lusty, selfish rake, too proud to accept Cherry as a suitable wife and too libertine to ask Mrs. Sullen for her hand after her divorce.

3.5.2 The Heroine and the Anti-heroine

While Hume (133) defines heroines as either “prominent and active” or “in the background as an object”, according to Ramczyk (15), true heroines are “[…] ladies who are successful in presenting the socially prescribed, artful mask of the polite world […] accomplished in the physical manners and deportment and adept in the required verbal dexterity (…)”. In other words: to Ramczyk the heroine is not defined by being the prominent and active character or the object in the background; the heroine is the woman who knows how to successfully manipulate language, how to improvise and react to challenging situations or find solutions to occurring problems. McDonald (48) gives a more comprehensive definition based on Ramczyk's approach, describing Restoration heroines as „clever and dynamic young women who clearly dominate their social world“. The heroine dominates her social world due to her quick wit and the attention she receives by the rake for being quick-witted also contributes to the heroine's feeling of superiority – in particular to the rake and the rake's (cast) mistresses. (Schneider 147)

Most Restoration Comedies "[…] agree in asserting the supremacy of the female", (Vrablitz 83) and let the heroines actions and words usually determine the social commentary and dramatic resolutions: the heroine can be assumed to be the perfect match for the rake-hero as she is always just as beautiful, rich and witty. But most importantly the heroine echoes the rake in her desires for freedom, independence and self-expression. She rebels from the accepted standard, of arranged marriages, for example, which can be linked to the growing popularity of middle-class values in regards of love marriages etc., and abstains from the female practice of using "hoods and modesty, masks and silence, things that shadow and conceal". (Bevis 78) She rejects the artificial nature of civilization's "masks" but masks her own feelings and emotions like no other: like the beau or rake(-hero), the heroine is always a high self-monitoring character, always careful not to let too much personal information slip as not to lose the position of superiority she holds over the other characters. The age-old saying "knowledge is power" certainly applies to the character of the Restoration Comedy heroine, as she is usually one of the most powerful and interesting characters of a play.

A perfect example of a powerful and commendable heroine is Harriet in Etherege's *The Man of Mode*, who, like the play's rake-hero Dorimant, also has fine self-control and solid, roguish wit. Harriet is Dorimant's equal, an intensification of the conventional heroine, much harsher and wittier, almost as fond of and skilled at dissembling as Dorimant in his role as rake-hero. (Underwood 80)

> YOUNG BELLAIR
> [...] What think you of playing it on booty?
> HARRIET
> What do you mean?
> YOUNG BELLAIR
> Pretend to be in love with one another. [...]
> HARRIET
> Let us do't, if it be but for the dear pleasure of dissembling. (*MoM* III.i. p.81)

It is her playful and charming wit that enchants Dorimant and entices him into a relationship that is both sexual and honorable and it is her frankness and sincerity that sets her apart from the other women, not her exceptional beauty,

upbringing, or fortune. By being witty and mocking Dorimant's seductive actions and deceptiveness, Harriet demands equality. Harriet manages to outplay him at his own game and demands actions, not just sweet words to be whispered into her ear:

Harriet exhibits several „unfeminine" and modern traits such as social disobedience, sharp wit, passion, striving for independence, etc. Her independence is also expressed through an independence of spirit noticeable in Harriet's excessive use of wit, sarcasm and mocking gestures:

> HARRIET
> [*to* Loveit]: Mr Dorimant has been your God almighty long enough, 'tis time to think of another.
> MRS LOVEIT
> Jeered by her! I will lock myself up in my house, and never see the world again.
> HARRIET
> A nunnery is the more fashionable place for such a retreat, and has been the fatal consequence of many a belle passion. (*MoM* V.ii. p. 143)

Etherege lets his heroine also express her desires openly and her perspectives dominate instead of society's or other character's beliefs and values: by refusing to settle for the man her mother has chosen for her to marry, Harriet demonstrates independence. From her strong character we can assume a shift of ideas where women were inferior to men, considered mere dependents, to women's growing awareness of limitations and aspirations for more freedom in expression. It is the heroine's drive for power that liberates her from her position as a man's lesser half and offers her independence from the social limitations imposed on her by family and society.

Nevertheless Harriet does not fall from her social role as a virtuous lady and demonstrates steadfastness against Dorimant and his advances – she remains virtuous, not falling from her role and holding on to her principles and values and society's expectations:

> HARRIET
> Do not fear it – I have not, nor never will do anything against my duty. Believe me, dear mother, do. (*MoM* V.ii. p. 140)

Harriet does not reveal her romantic feelings for Dorimant openly, she does neither pursue nor chase after him. Treating her and her lover's emotions playfully and wittily, Harriet proves ample self-control. It is her self-awareness and introspective ability, the immunity to "the pangs of love" that distinguishes the liberated heroine from the cast mistresses who allow their hearts to rule their heads: (McDonald 39)

> HARRIET
> [aside]: I feel as great a change within; but he shall never know it. (*MoM* III.iii. p. 94)

Being a high self-monitoring character, Harriet only loses her social mask a couple of times, either through her sharp tongue and malice, revealing her jealousy or agitation, or in involuntary bodily signs such as blushing. Even though Harriet cannot control these involuntary, truthful glimpses into her inner nature and her emotional state, she still manages or at least tries to avoid emotional outbursts – for example by turning from Dorimant so as to not let him read her and her unambiguous body language. (Fujimura 111 quoted in Van der Weele 397)

> HARRIET
> [aside, *turning from* Dorimant]: My love springs with my blood into my face, I dare not look upon him yet. (*MoM* V.ii. p. 135)

Harriet admits to being an adept actress and quite „apt" at masking her inner nature and true emotions:

> YOUNG BELLAIR
> [...] Look grave, and fall a-fanning yourself – admirably well acted.
> HARRIET
> I think I am pretty apt at these matters. (*MoM* III.ii. p. 83)

And during a conversation with Sir Fopling Harriet is not reluctant to admit she hides emotions she does not like:

> SIR FOPLING
> Are you women as fond of a vizard as we men are?
> HARRIET
> I am very fond of a vizard that covers a face I do not like, sir. (*MoM* IV.i. p. 108)

But no matter how hard Harriet has fought for her independence and self-expression, now matter how good her role-play and self-monitoring skills are – in the end she settles for the role of the weak, submissive woman: her wit dwindles and Harriet retreats to the accepted, time-established standards, submitting herself to Dorimant and her family's plan of taking her to the country, a place she can "scare indure [...] in landscapes and in hangings." (Etherege III.i. p. 81)

Another heroine, Millamant, has, like so many Restoration characters, a French and very telling name: being of exceptional beauty and sparkling wit, *The Country Wife*'s heroine is "loved by thousands". Openly enjoying both being admired by her many suitors as well as teasing her one true love Mirabell about his efforts in winning her, Millamant is a coquette heroine exhibiting rakish character traits: she is witty and appreciates sharp wit, as all rake-heroes and their heroines do.

> MILLAMANT
> Well, an illiterate man's my aversion. I wonder at the impudence of any illiterate man, to offer to make love. (*WoW* III.i.371-372)

Being a very libertine character both in her thoughts and spirit Millamant does not accept her social role as a passive, modest woman and is not shy to express her discontent with male sovereignty:

> MILLAMANT
> […] I shan't endure to be reprimanded nor instructed; t'is so dull to act always by advice, and so tedious to be told of one's faults: I can't bear it. (*WoW* II.i.404-406)

Millamant is a rather unconventional heroine, as it is "[...] very uncommon that a woman should have such "rakish" character traits [...]." (Vrablitz 96) Millamant is constantly hiding behind her rakish mask of malicious wit,

> MILLAMANT
> I won't be called names after I'm married; positively, I won't be called names.
> MIRABELL
> Names!
> MILLAMANT
> Ay, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweetheart, and the rest of that nauseous cant in which men and their wives are so fulsomely

> familiar. I shall never bear that. Good Mirabell, don't let us be so familiar or fond […] Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together, but let us be very strange and well-bred; let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while, and as well-bred as if we were not married at all. (*WoW* IV.i.165-180)

It is not until the end that Millamant drops her mask and allows a glimpse at her inner nature:

> MILLAMANT
> Well, if Mirabell should not make a good husband, I am a lost thing, for I find I love him violently. (*WoW* IV.i.278-279)

Millamant is a brilliant actress, never losing balance, never falling from her role and always exhibiting ideal poise. (Salgādo xxiv) She is a very high self-monitoring character, paying close attention to her behavior in public. Only once we see her fall from her role as the witty, self-contained high self-monitoring heroine – an involuntary bodily sign giving away her emotional state, yet it remains unknown whether her fury is in any way connected to Mirabell:

> MRS MARWOOD
> You have a colour. What's the matter?
> MILLAMANT
> That horrid fellow Petulant has provoked me into a flame […] (*WoW* III.i.250-251)

A heroine quite unlike Harriet and Millamant is Farquhar's Dorinda as she does not display the same qualities the other two heroines display. By deciding to marry the rake-hero Aimwell even though he confesses to being a fraud, Dorinda, at first smitten by Aimwell thinking him rich "[...] there will be title, place, and precedence, the park, the play, and the drawing-room, splendour, equipage, noise and flambeaux" (*BS* IV.iv.402-4), does prove her heroine status – but she also proves inexperienced with scheming, role-play, raillery and wit. And even though Dorinda manages to reform her rake Aimwell by moving him with her love in a way „that he can no longer deceive her" (Blake xii) and even though she herself is in a way reformed – from an inexperienced child to a young yet virtuous lover, Dorinda still does not have the high self-monitoring abilities the other heroines possess. She is uncomfortable with scheming and carries her heart on her tongue, so to speak, telling Aimwell that she is a „[...] a

woman: colours, concealments may hide a thousand faults [...]". (*BS* V.iv.12) Both Harriet as well as Millamant reveal their true emotions in the end but without letting their lovers in on their secrets of trying to hide their "thousand faults". Dorinda is not an anti-heroine, but she is no equal to her Lord Aimwell, as she is not familiar with role-play or any kind of rakish behavior and even though she is able to unmask Archer's role-play, she cannot see through Aimwell and his initial little scheme of marrying her for her fortune.

Typical examples of anti-heroines include Alithea in *The Country Wife* or Emilia in *The Man of Mode*: deprecatingly titled "anti-heroines" because they are generally low self-monitoring characters and total opposites of their plays' heroines' strong, dynamic and assertive characters, Alithea and Emilia adhere to the passive role that is assigned to them through Restoration society. Both passive, modest and naïve women, they exhibit all the traits a young woman was supposed to exhibit at the time – beauty, honesty and virtue, and, like all anti-heroines, they are unfamiliar and uneasy with scheming, lying and gossiping, and seem to be lacking insight and/or high self-monitoring abilities:

Alithea for example is well aware that Sparkish's want of jealousy may be a sign for his lack of both esteem as well as love for her; yet she is uneasy with Harcourt, who truly loves her, courting her. Almost until the end of the play Alithea vows to remain virtuous and faithful to a fiancé who is not interested in her as a human being but as an asset. Alithea speaks openly about her feelings for Harcourt with her maid Lucy, owning that she is bound to Sparkish, lest her reputation should suffer.

> ALITHEA
> 'Tis Sparkish's confidence in my truth that obliges me to be so faithful to him. (*CW* IV.i. p. 208)

Alithea is in no way comparable to Harriet and Millamant, who are libertine characters both in their thoughts and spirits, not willing to forfeit neither their happiness nor their freedom for a man they do not love.

The young Emilia is also very reserved, but unlike Alithea whose powers of observation do her credit, very unaware and also seemingly undesiring of anything that is going on around her, as she does not respond to the gossip or

to the initial flirtations of Old Bellair. It remains unclear whether her innocence may merely be the consequence of her ignorance or her virtue, yet her lacking observation skills may point towards her inability to see through others, especially Old Bellair:

> LADY TOWNLEY
> On my word, the old man comes apace; I'll lay my life he's smitten.
> EMILIA
> This is nothing but the pleasantness of his humour. (*MoM* II.i. p. 66)

In other words – because Emilia is a low self-monitoring character and not an apt role-player, she is not able to recognize or understand the roles the other characters exhibit. She is also not able to unmask Sir Fopling Flutter as a Witwoud; to her "[...] he passes for a wit with many." (*MoM* III.iii. p. 91)

The comedies of Etherege, Wycherley and Congreve all have strong women as principal characters, that, unlike the weak, low-self-monitoring characters also develop as the plays develop. Neither Dorinda nor Emilia are looking to be independent; they are all looking for a husband, all choosing to be and to remain passive objects of male affection, like birds in golden cages, making them their inferiors and as a result – anti-heroines.

Harriet and Millamant, true Restoration heroines, reflect the real world's conventions but other than their models in the real world, they do not fail to express their points of view: that women can be just as witty, just as wise as men and should therefore have the same legal rights, privileges and the same degree of independence. (Young 1)

3.5.3 The Adulterous Wife

Since female infidelity not only posed a threat to male inheritance and a husband's reputation, but was also considered a rebellious act against patriarchal authority, the character of the adulterous wife was certainly one of the more interesting types and the topic particularly delicate. (Chernaik 186)

The adulteress can be both a prominent and active leading character or a mere 'object' in the background of the play, but either way, the unusually smart, scheming and flirtatious young adulteresses, unlike the boasting cuckolds, usually tried to conceal their affairs in order not to ruin their own reputation as well as that of their husbands. To avoid being found out or being seen together conversing, the cuckold as well as the adulteress had to rely on their staff such as close (chamber-) maids, servants and footmen to deliver letters, arrange clandestine meetings, or distract unexpectedly appearing husbands.

The adulteresses' relationship with her husband, her relationship with the rake as well as her age and standing in society are determining factors or triggers for any kind of lewd and adulterous behavior and are therefore of particular interest. Interestingly, even though deviant sexuality, immoral behavior and cuckolding are recurrent topics in Restoration Comedy, actual adulterous acts are less frequent than planned infidelity. Gill (*Gender* 194) distinguishes between **three types** of female adulterous characters: the **first type** is ***the active adulteress***, a scheming and deceiving character. The perfect example of such an active adulteress would be Lady Fidget and other members of her so-called 'virtuous gang' in *The Country Wife*, who are all "sexually active hypocrites who scheme, betray, entrap, and deceive". (*Gender* 194) Reasons for adultery are manifold but Lady Fidget's motif is explained through her husband's neglect of her. Lady Fidget describes her situation with her husband, who is only interested in business and politics but hardly interested in his wife, very fittingly in a witty little two-liner: "Who for his business, from his wife will run; takes the best care, to have her bus'ness done". (*CW* II.i. p. 185)

Through out the entire play Lady Fidget and her gang are portrayed as deceiving, naturally debased women that “interpret the term honour in a very self-righteous and dishonest way.” (Nägerl 50) According to them, it is only cuckolding if the affair becomes public and threatens to damage their own and their husbands’ reputations:

> LADY FIDGET
> [...] ‘Tis not an injury to a husband till it be an injury to our honours; so that a woman of honour loses no honour with a private person. [...] (*CW* II.i. p. 179)

Their fake and overly exaggerated display of virtue arises only from their need for camouflage. Lady Fidget is a characteristic coquette who is trying to pass for a virtuous prude with her hypocritical squeamishness about sex to keep her husband from finding out about her infidelity and to being able to secretly carry on with her affairs.

> SIR JASPER
> Stay, stay, ‘faith, to tell you the naked truth –
> LADY FIDGET
> Fie, Sir Jasper! Do not use that word ‘naked’. (*CW* II.i. p. 180)

> LADY FIDGET
> O Lord, here’s a man! Sir Jasper, my mask, my mask! I would not be seen here for the world.
> SIR JASPER
> What, not when I am with you?
> LADY FIDGET
> No, no, my honour – let’s be gone. (*CW* IV.iii. p. 225)

The gender roles are further reversed in *The Country Wife*, when Lady Fidget and the virtuous gang are drinking heavily and pursuing Horner in his own lodgings: neither was it socially acceptable for women to be seen drunk in public and behave that frivolously, nor was it fitting for women to pursue men without damaging their reputation. It was for a man to court a woman, not for the woman to make advances or even offer themselves up to him:

> LADY FIDGET
> [...] for he knows china very well, and has himself very good, but will not let me see it lest I should beg some. But I will find it out, and have what I came for yet. (*CW* IV.iii. p. 221)

In the end when all virtuous gang members realize that they have all been deceived by Horner, they decide to show solidarity so that they all go unpunished and Sir Jasper Fidget does not find about his wife's betrayal:

> LADY FIDGET
> Come, speak, ladies; this is my false villain.
> MRS SQUEAMISH
> And mine too.
> MRS DAINTY FIDGET
> And mine.
> HORNER
> Well then, you are all three my false rogues too, and there's an end on't.
> LADY FIDGET
> Well then, there's no remedy. Sister sharers, let us not fall out, but have a care of our honour. Though we get no presents, no jewels of him, we are savers of our honour, the jewel of most value and use, which shines yet to the world unsuspected, though it be counterfeit. (*CW* V.iv. p. 248-249)

Lady Fidget is the perfect example of a character possessing and displaying high self-monitoring qualities in public and low self-monitoring skills in private, when she letting her guard down with Horner for example. That Lady Fidget has high self-monitoring skills should not come as a surprise, due to the simple fact that she needs to be very careful around her husband and later on also around the other members of the virtuous gang so as to not disclose Horner's secret that he is in fact not impotent as well as her own secret that she is having an affair with him so as to save her honor and reputation. Lady Fidget often loses her virtue or chastity but she always preserves and protects her honor, as her chastity is related to the individual, as opposed to honor or reputation, which functions as a social value. (Vrablitz 77 ff)

That Fidget opens up to Horner about her worries being exposed and losing her reputation is either a sign of poor self-monitoring, because she gives Horner the power to blackmail her with his knowledge or maybe a hint at her true inner nature – that she is not the ice cold, scheming adulteress she pretends to be but that she does care for her husband's reputation after all. Another way of interpreting the situation is of course that the principles of role theory are yet again not sufficient or applicable in regards to successfully analyzing Lady Fidget's character.

Another example of an active adulteress is *The Beaux'* Stratagem's Mrs. Sullen, a witty, affectionate woman, who is unhappily married apparently due to having been married carelessly. Thinking that obtaining a divorce is very unlikely, Mrs. Sullen wants to improve her situation by taking steps to win her husband Sullen's interest or at least bring him to show her a little kindness – oddly enough by making him jealous by cheating on him first with a French Count, then Archer:

> MRS SULLEN
> Well, sister, since the truth will out, it may do as well now as hereafter. I think one way to rouse my lethargic, scottish husband is to give him a rival. Security begets negligence in all people, and men must be alarmed to make 'em alert in their duty. Women are like pictures: of no value in the hands of a fool till he hears men of sense bid high for the purchase. (*BS* II.ii.125)

Mrs. Sullen is trying to justify her decision by pointing out the hypocrisy and blatant injustice women are subjected to by being treated differently from men, suggesting a libertine and liberal-minded character:

> MRS SULLEN
> […] why should not we be as free in our friendships as the men? (*BS* II.ii.7-8)

Mrs. Sullen recognizes the fact that Sullen may indeed not love her and be therefore not hurt or surprised by her attempt at making him jealous; still she tries to execute her plan of winning his affection or at least his recognition and kindness, which is even more odd, by making him jealous. Just like Lady Loveit in Etherege's *The Man of Mode* Mrs. Sullen misjudges the situation: Sullen is not jealous, on the contrary, it seems he would support or at least not mind her having an affair – as long as it does not reflect badly upon his reputation.

> SULLEN
> Look ye, madam, don't think that my anger proceeds from any concern I have for your honour, but for my own, and if you can contrive a way of being a whore without making me a cuckold, do it and welcome. (*BS* III.iii.349-352)

By letting the Count court her and her husband not acting upon Mrs. Sullen's apparent adultery, Mrs. Sullen embarrasses herself, just like Mrs. Loveit, when her plan does not go as planned.

Mrs. Sullen is quite obviously the low self-monitoring character, always speaking too openly about her feelings and innermost thoughts with her sister-in-law Dorinda, as well as with her husband Sullen and her suitor and love interest Archer. Mrs. Sullen even admits that she could not control herself and resist temptation even though it would be damaging to her reputation:

> DORINDA
> Will you promise not to make yourself easy in the meantime with my lord's friend?
> MRS SULLEN
> […] Though to confess the truth, I do love that fellow, - and if I met him dressed as he should be, and I undressed as I should be – look ye, sister, I have no supernatural gifts, - I can't swear I could resist the temptation […] (*BS* IV.i.419-433)

But Mrs. Sullen is not only carefree enough to let her mask slip in Dorinda's presence, even with Lady Bountiful, her mother-in-law and one of her clients or customers in the room, Mrs. Sullen does not manage or care enough to keep up appearances, revealing her innermost feelings, her contempt for her husband Sullen:

> WOMAN
> It comes first as one might say with a sort of dizziness in his foot, then he had a kind of laziness in his joints, and then his leg broke out, and then it swelled, and then it closed again, and then it broke out again, and then it festered, and then it grew better, and then it grew worse again.
> MRS SULLEN
> Ha, ha, ha.
> LADY BOUNTIFUL
> How can you be merry with the misfortunes of other people?
> MRS SULLEN
> Because my own make me sad, madam.
> LADY BOUNTIFUL
> The worst reason in the world, daughter. Your own misfortunes should teach you to pity others.
> MRS SULLEN
> But the woman's misfortunes and mine are nothing alike. Her husband is sick, and mine, alas, is in health.
> LADY BOUNTIFUL
> What, would you wish your husband sick?
> MRS SULLEN
> Not of a sore leg, of all things. (*BS* IV.i.33-46)

The **second type** of female adulterous characters according to Gill (*Gender* 194) includes ***all characters that are prone to being seduced due to their nativity and young age***, examples include both Belinda in *The Man of Mode* and *The Country Wife*'s Margery Pinchwife, a "naïve or ignorant young [woman] who seem[s] potentially amendable to seduction."

According to Horner it is not the young naïve wives that are to be blamed for being seduced (by him), but the jealous husbands that drive their wives into the open arms of a cuckold maker:

> HORNER
> No, a foolish rival and a jealous husband assist their rival's designs; for they are sure to make their women hate them, which is the first step to their love for another man. (*CW* III.ii. p. 191)

Pinchwife, the jealous husband, was a prominent cuckold maker himself as we are led to assume by Horner's comments, a fact making it quite obvious why the audience sides with his wife Margery rather than with him, even though the wrong-doing in the form of adultery is on her part and not on his:

> HORNER
> But I did not expect marriage from such a whoremaster as you, one that knew the town so much, and women so well. (*CW* I.i. p. 163)

Mrs. Pinchwife is introduced as a naïve and simple-minded, young country bumpkin, too innocent and inexperienced to use adultery as revenge against her husband's attempts at keeping her ignorant. Margery differs greatly from Lady Fidget in her upbringing (country versus town dichotomy) and her level of (sexual) experience: unlike Lady Fidget, who commits adultery for her husband's neglect of her, Margery Pinchwife commits adultery not so much for her own pleasure but out of naivity and curiosity by agreeing to Horner's proposal of teaching her "the real duties" of a wife, meaning sexual intercourse.

Her innocent questions at the beginning of the play reveal her lack of fashion and her openly clownish character: she is satirized almost like one of the fops, clumsy and awkward she is the model country fool:

> MRS PINCHWIFE
> Pray, sister, tell me why my husband looks so grum here in town, and keeps me up so close, and will not let me go a-walking, nor let me wear my best gown yesterday.

ALITHEA
Oh, he's jealous, sister.
MRS PINCHWIFE
Jealous? What's that?
ALITHEA
He's afraid you should love another man. (Wycherley II.i.169)

Horner seduces her, knowing full well that Margery is innocent and naïve, making her an easy victim. Also, Horner seems to be enjoying making Pinchwife jealous; he knows that Pinchwife's jealousy is both justified since Pinchwife knows about Horner's reputation as well as explicable as Pinchwife used to be a cuckold-maker himself.

Due to Pinchwife denying Margery her freedom, her pleasures of town life and treating her like property, the audience sides with her and Horner in outwitting the fop; according to Nägerl (58) a common development "[...] no matter if the rake's aim is marriage or fornication." Berkowitz (83-84) also deflects the blame to Pinchwife, arguing that adultery is understood under the circumstances: "[...] at least part of the blame can be moved back to the partner who generated the situation." Pinchwife gets what he deserves, so Berkowitz, „[...] not merely because husbands are made to be cuckolded or because graceless characters are meant to be exploited by the mannered, but because it is proper punishment for his mistreatment of his wife."

Margery is ridiculous, yet truthful, almost to a fault, which quickly changes over the course of the play, as we see her develop from a social and sexual simpleton and a low self-monitoring character whose heart is on her tongue and her answers always truthful to a high self-monitoring character: she quickly learns to lie and scheme and hold her tongue when necessary to keep her affair with Horner secret, a development that has often a time been observed in the real world the play mirrors.

MRS PINCHWIFE
(*aside*): I'll go, but she is not within to come to him. I have just got time to know of Lucy her maid, who first set me on work, what lie I shall tell next [...] (*CW* V.i. p.235)

MRS PINCHWIFE
[*aside to* Lucy *and* Horner]: Since you'll have me tell more lies [...] (*CW* V.iv. p.256)

Mrs. Pinchwife gradually becomes so cunning and resourceful, she even adopts some of her former comic mannerisms to cover her adulterous actions: taking advantage of her husband's absence to write Horner a second letter revealing her true feelings for him, Margery then shows Pinchwife the first and wrong letter to Horner when caught and in the end she even pretends to be upset at her husband for thinking she would not know how to seal a letter to seal it herself and secretly substitute the first and hostile letter for the second and true love letter. In another episode Mrs. Pinchwife even pretends she is writing the love letter for Alithea. Margery's change is the most apparent and surprising of all the other characters, her behavior becoming controlling and her self-monitoring improving vastly.

Another example of a second type adulteress, prone to being seduced due to her nativity and young age, is *The Man of Mode*'s Belinda:

Belinda, Mrs. Loveit and Dorimant are involved in a special love triangle in Etherege's *The Man of Mode:* Belinda is Dorimant's current mistress, a young woman of quality, though more affectionate than affected. She's shocked at Dorimant's vindictiveness, though not sufficiently to destroy her allegiance to him even though it means betraying her friend Mrs. Loveit: (Wilkinson 188)

> BELINDA
> [*aside*]: Now to carry on my plot. Nothing but love could make me capable of so much falsehood; 'tis time to begin, lest Dorimant should come before her jealousy has stung her. [...] (*MoM* II.ii. p. 71)

Still she voluntarily assumes the role of an object in Dorimant's love game, even though she has ample occasions to observe Dorimant vowing his loyalty to Mrs. Loveit – and then breaking his vows. We can assume that Belinda knows that it is unlikely that Dorimant will change for her and will be faithful to her.

> BELINDA
> [aside]: If she should make him jealous, that may make him fond of her again. I must dissuade her from it. Lord! My dear, this will certainly make him hate you. (*MoM* III.iii. p. 98)

Only later in the play when Belinda realizes that Dorimant has once again broken his word, she comes to her senses: Dorimant does not love her; he does not care for her nor her reputation. He has used her like all the others before

her and she is undone. She realizes that she made a mistake in allowing her heart to rule her head:

> BELINDA
> [aside]: Then I am betrayed indeed. H'has broke his word, and I love a man that does not care for me. (*MoM* V.i. p. 125)

Belinda cannot be described as a typical high self-monitoring character because she does not see through Dorimant and his deceptive role-play:

> BELINDA
> [aside]: I have watched his look, and find no alteration there. Did he love her, some signs of jealousy would have appeared. (*MoM* III.iii. p.101)

Nevertheless Belinda manages to keep her affair with Dorimant secret from Mrs. Loveit and the other characters: her impression management, her self-monitoring and role orchestrating are almost flawless as she only falls from her role once and that only very briefly when asked by Mrs. Loveit of her whereabouts. Her fear is portrayed both in an involuntarily bodily sign – blood draining from her face, leaving her pale, as well in an aside to the audience.

> BELINDA
> [aside]: I am so frightened, my countenance will betray me.
> Mrs Loveit: Belinda! What makes you look so pale? (*MoM* V.i. p. 125)

Belinda manages to deceive Mrs. Loveit yet again and divert the attention from her involuntary glimpse into her inner nature. She manages to not give away too much personal information and repair the crack in her social mask, keeping her role as Mrs. Loveit's friend and ally intact, thereby avoiding negative discrepancy.

She also manages to convince Medley, Emilia and Lady Townley of her loyalty to Lady Loveit and that to her "[...] Dorimant is certainly the worst man breathing." (*MoM* III.ii. p. 84), again slipping into the role of Loveit's supporter and ally and proving a deep understanding of her role and role expectations.

The **third and last type** of female adulterous characters according to Gill (*Gender* 194) ***includes*** characters like Alithea, Margery Pinchwife's sister-in-law and other ***"charming virgins who possess wealth and wit"***.

Like Dorinda, Alithea is both truthful and loyal, and like Millamant she is also virtuous and also not unfamiliar with the pleasures of the town:

> ALITHEA
> Brother, you are my only censurer, and the honour of your family shall sooner suffer in your wife there than in me, though I take the innocent liberty of the town. (*CW* II.i. p. 169)

Alithea is not an adulteress as she is not married to Sparkish, yet she is promised to him, and breaking off her engagement and letting Harcourt court her may shed a bad light on both her and Sparkish's reputation ("But 'tis your honour too I am concerned for." (*CW* III.ii. p. 195)), a fact she is very well aware and afraid of:

> ALITHEA
> [...] I must marry him, my reputation would suffer in the world else. (*CW* II.i. p. 175)

Alithea is not only bound to Sparkish through her engagement and the fear of losing her reputation, she is also good-natured and truthful, unable to deceive or injure her fiancé even though she is in fact in love with Harcourt:

> ALITHEA
> I was engaged to marry, you see, another man, ***whom my justice will not suffer me to deceive or injure***. [...] 'Tis Sparkish's confidence in ***my truth that obliges me to be so faithful*** to him. (*CW* IV.i. p. 207-208) (emphasis added)

Alithea may be a high self-monitoring character, capable of empathy and controlling her self-portrayal in social interactions, but she is also an anti-heroine. She is careful not to let her emotions overrule her rationale and her principles and she is willing to give up on her love Harcourt to save her honor and to keep her promise to marry Sparkish.

3.5.4 The Jealous Mistress, Wife, Husband or Lover

Jealous mistresses, wives, husbands and lovers are more than just a recurrent topic in Restoration Comedy - the plays practically live and die by those confusions of the heart and intrigues spun by cast-off mistresses or rakish husbands' "jealous to lunacy". (Vrablitz 106)

An example of such a lunatic mistress is Mrs. Loveit in *The Man of Mode*, Dorimant's ditched mistress. Loveit is very much aware that Dorimant might be playing her, being familiar with his schemes and his reputation, yet she cannot stop loving him: "I know he is the devil, but he has something of the angel yet […] that I must love him, be he never so wicked." (*MoM* II.ii. p. 69)

Mrs. Loveit is both jealous to excess as well as attempting to use jealousy in her favor to win Dorimant back whom she has pushed away with her jealous fits:

> DORIMANT
> When love grows diseased, the best thing we can do is to put it to a violent death. I cannot endure the torture of a lingering and consumptive passion.
> MRS LOVEIT
> Can you think mine sickly?
> DORIMANT
> Oh, 'tis desperately ill! What worse symptoms are there than your being always uneasy when I visit you, your picking quarrels with me on slight occasions and in my absence kindly listening to the impertinences of every fashionable fool that talks to you? (*MoM* II.ii. p. 75)

Instead of blaming herself and her behavior towards him, Loveit accuses Dorimant of having grown weary and bored of her. But being a passionate, strong woman, Loveit refuses to accept the abandonment; rejecting the fact that she should remain a passive object in Dorimant's love game, Mrs. Loveit vows to seek revenge. Her plot is simple: evoking enough jealousy in Dorimant using Sir Fopling Flutter as 'bait':

> MRS LOVEIT
> He is not jealous, but I will make him so, and be revenged a way he little thinks on. [...] 'Twill make him uneasy though he does not care for me; I know the effects of jealousy on men of his proud temper. [...] 'Tis

> the strongest cordial we can give to dying love. It often brings it back when there's no sign of life remaining. [...] (*MoM* III.iii. p. 98)

In her attempt to manipulate and hurt Dorimant, Loveit sacrifices some of her most desirable female traits: obedience, temperance, honesty and reputation. Venturing into the masculine domain of sexual intrigue and power manipulation she is ridiculed and rejected by both the male and the other female characters:

> MRS LOVEIT
> [...] There is no truth in friendship neither. Women, as well as men, all are false, or all are so to me at least. (*MoM* V.i. p. 123)

Posing a threat as an aggressive force, wanting to dominate men and assuming male prerogatives – even though she is still more a victim than a victimizer – Mrs. Loveit is punished for engaging in the male activity of assertiveness and cunning. She has both beauty and some wit, but her affectation and unnatural jealousy make her the object of malicious laughter and ridicule, and both Dorimant and Harriet rally her unmercifully when her plot is uncovered:

> HARRIET
> [*to* Loveit]: Mr Dorimant has been your God almighty long enough, 'tis time to think of another.
> MRS LOVEIT
> Jeered by her! I will lock myself up in my house, and never see the world again.
> HARRIET
> A nunnery is the more fashionable place for such a retreat, and has been the fatal consequence of many a belle passion. (*MoM* V.ii. p. 143)

Mrs. Loveit is the ultimate low self-monitoring character as she has no self-control whatsoever, her conduct fully determined by her attitude and sentiments: getting angry with Dorimant, crying, cursing and breaking down in public, Mrs. Loveit is so frustrated and aggressive, she even tears her fan:

> MRS LOVEIT
> [...] Hell and furies! ***[Tears her fan in pieces.]*** (emphasis added)
> *[...]*
> MRS LOVEIT
> Horror and distraction seize you, sorrow and remorse gnaw your soul, and punish all your perjuries to me – ***[Weeps]*** (emphasis added) (*MoM* II.ii. p. 73)

Mrs. Loveit even turns violent, laying hands on Dorimant, first pushing him away during a jealous fit, and then pulling him back into her arms in a final and desperate attempt at keeping him from leaving her:

> MRS LOVEIT
> Stand off, you sha' not stare upon her so. **[*Pushing* Dorimant *away*.]** (emphasis added) (*MoM* II.ii. p. 74)
> [...]
>
> *[He offers to go, and* **Loveit *pulls him back*.***]* (emphasis added)
> MRS LOVEIT
> Come back, you sha' not go. (*MoM* II.ii. p. 75)

She weeps, rails, she curses, pushes, pulls, she vows revenge. Not one emotion Mrs. Loveit does not display openly, not one (ill-) thought, she keeps to herself. Each and every character of the play knows her weakness, "[...] her old distemper, jealousy." (Lady Townley, *MoM* III.ii. p. 84)

Some, especially the men and Harriet, find amusement in teasing Mrs. Loveit with her lack of composure. Only in the end Mrs. Loveit finally manages, railed by Harriet, to hurry away and for once not engage in repartee she would have lost to the witty and composed and tempered Harriet, no doubt.

> MRS LOVEIT
> Hold, heart, till I get home! Should I answer 'twould make her triumph greater. *[Is going out.]* (*MoM* V.ii. p. 143)

And moreover, not only is Mrs. Loveit bad at hiding her feelings constantly giving away her true inner nature both in her words as well as in her actions and in involuntary bodily signs, also most of her role-play is badly executed. At least Dorimant has no difficulties seeing through his cast-off mistress' insincere behavior:

> MRS LOVEIT: Oh! Filthy cordivant, how I hate the smell! [***Laughs in a loud affected way***.] (emphasis added) (*MoM* III.iii. p. 99)
>
> MRS LOVEIT
> Ha, ha, ha! I never heard of anything so pleasant.
> HARRIET
> [to Dorimant]: She's extremely overjoyed at something.
> DORIMANT

> At nothing; she is one of those hoyting ladies who gaily fling themselves about and force a laugh when their aching hearts are full of discontent and malice. (*MoM* V.ii. p. 139)

Another jealous character is Pinchwife in *The Country Wife*: being well aware of the consensus that negligent and thoughtless husbands deserve the horns their wives so often give them, Pinchwife is anxious to keep his young innocent and naïve wife ignorant and away from temptation:

> PINCHWIFE
> [*Aside*] Well, if thou cuckold me, 'twill be my own fault, for cuckolds and bastards are generally makers of their own fortune. (*CW* III.i. p. 187)

For Pinchwife, the safest method of keeping his wife Margery from cuckolding him means keeping her away from all the pleasures of the town and especially all other men, in particular the (in)famous Horner. But by making sure his wife knows of all the dangers the pleasures of the town bring with them, Pinchwife involuntarily pushes his curious wife even more so into Horner's arms:

> PINCHWIFE
> Ay, my dear, you must love me only, and not be like the naughty town-women, who only hate their husbands, and love every man else, love plays, visits, fine coaches, fine clothes, fiddles, balls treats, and so lead a wicked town life.
> [...]
> ALITHEA
> (*aside*): The fool has forbid me discovering to her the pleasures of the town, and he is now setting agog upon them himself. (*CW* II.i. p. 170*)*

Pinchwife's concerns are justified however, his wife Margery being introduced as a very naïve and inexperienced young lover, unfamiliar with the concept of jealousy:

> MRS PINCHWIFE
> Jealous? What's that?
> ALITHEA
> He's afraid you should love another man.
> MRS PINCHWIFE
> How should he be afraid of my loving another man, when he will not let me see any but himself? (*CW* II.i. p. 168)

> PINCHWIFE
> (…) you'll make me sick too.
> MRS PINCHWIFE
> Of what sickness?
> PINCHWIFE

> O, of that which is worse than the plague – jealousy.
> MRS PINCHWIFE
> Pish, you jeer! I'm sure there's no such disease in our receipt-book at home. (*CW* III.i. p. 187)

Also Margery Pinchwife seems like quite the curious young lady, fascinated if not drawn to other men:

> MRS PINCHWIFE
> Indeed I was a-weary of the play, but I liked hugeously the actors; they are the goodliest properest men, sister!
> ALITHEA
> Oh, but you must not like the actors, sister.
> MRS PINCHWIFE
> Ay, how should I help it, sister? [...] (*CW* II.i. p. 168)

An ideal-typical low self-monitoring character, Pinchwife is neither mindful nor adept at controlling his emotions, his conduct determined by his emotions – his jealousy. The other characters are well aware of his weakness, frequently commenting on his jealous fits, a sure indication that Pinchwife is unable to display appropriate self-portrayal:

> MRS SQUEAMISH
> Here's an example of jealousy. (*CW* II.i. p. 178)

Even though Pinchwife has every right to be worried about his naïve and ignorant young wife, like Mrs. Loveit, he is being mocked by the other characters for his irrational and frantic behavior to preventing being made a cuckold:

> PINCHWIFE
> [...] I will not be a cuckold, sir, I will not. (*CW* IV.iii. p. 227)

Especially Horner enjoys playing his little mind- and word games with Pinchwife:

> HORNER
> Thou art mad with jealousy. (…)
> Pinchwife
> I will not be a cuckold, I say. There will be danger in making me a cuckold.
> HORNER
> Why, wert thou not well cured of thy last clap? (*CW* IV.iii. p. 227)

By inferring Pinchwife is not dangerous when made a cuckold, but dangerous because Pinchwife might have passed gonorrhea to his newly wedded wife, a sexually transmitted disease Pinchwife would have picked up from cuckolding other men, Horner infers Pinchwife having been cuckolding other men himself, turning the tables against him.

Pinchwife is eager to give information about his beliefs, attitudes and also his self-perception, but mostly he voices his concerns in asides. Anxious not to reveal too much information about his concerns or his plans – of keeping Margery locked up for example, it could be said that Pinchwife is trying to adjust his behavior and offer a range of possibilities of self display as high self-monitoring characters would do:

> PINCHWIFE
> [*Aside] […]* Our sisters and daughters, like usurers' money, are safest when put out, but our wives, like their writings, never safe but in our closets under lock and key. (*CW* V.ii. p. 239-240)

Yet Pinchwife does not always succeed: found in unpleasant situations, mocked by the other male characters for example, Pinchwife displays situationally less adaptive behavior. Pinchwife gets defensive, angry even and resorts to his staple sentence that he "[...] will not be a cuckold, [...] will not." (*CW* IV.iii. p. 227) again revealing his innermost feelings and fears.

Another character that needs mentioning here is Sparkish, Pinchwife's brother-in-law to be, as he is the exact opposite of Pinchwife: Sparkish is a foppish rake, wanting jealousy when Pinchwife is wanting trust:

> SPARKISH
> Is it for your honour or mine, to have me jealous? That he makes love to you is a sign you are handsome; and that I am not jealous is a sign you are virtuous. That, I think, is for your honour. (*CW* III.ii. p. 195)

It can be assumed that Sparkish's want of jealousy is a direct result of Sparkish's lack of passion for Alithea, which he admits later on in the play. (*CW* V.iii. p. 243) Apart from her beauty, Sparkish's main reasons in wanting Alithea lie in her exceptional beauty and her reputation „[...] so that she may add further lustre to his image of himself." (Salgādo 23)

> SPARKISH

> I love to be envied, and would not marry a wife that I alone could love. Loving alone is as dull as eating alone. (…) (*CW* III.ii. p. 199)

Harcourt sees right through Sparkish's bad role-play, explaining his lack of jealousy with his lack of passion for his wife to be as a true lover cannot help but being jealous sometimes anymore than a lover can avoid feeling the need to express his love in a poem: „[p]oetry in love is no more to be avoided than jealousy" (CW III.ii. p. 192)

3.5.5 Cuckolders and Cuckolds

All Restoration Comedies deal with betrayal and secret affairs to some extent: their initiation, arrangement and of course their handling. The infamous Restoration term for ‘cuckold’ originated from the French word for ‘cuckoo’ (‘coucou’), a wild bird who lays its eggs in other bird’s nests to be hatched and the young to be cared for: being ‘cuckolded’ therefore is a pejorative term referring to a man whose wife is having an affair with another man outside her marriage. Being cheated, just like the other bird by the cuckoo, the cuckolded husband runs the risk of unknowingly raising his rival’s offspring as his very own. (Foyster 67)

The act of cuckolding and the act of being cuckolded can be understood as two men and a woman caught in a love triangle in which the cuckolder is always superior to the cuckold. Together with the adulteress, they hold more knowledge, knowledge about the affair, and more (sexual) power. (Nägerl 59) Interestingly, Restoration Comedy society blames both the adulterous wife but even more so the cheated husband for a wife’s transgressions, as it is a husband’s duty to satisfy his wife’s sexual appetite. An example of this would be *The Country Wife*’s Lady Fidget when stating: “Who for his business, from his Wife will run; Takes the best care, to have her bus’ness done”. (*CW* II.i. p. 185) This shows that the current opinion was that it is a husbands’ own fault if his wife has to seek sexual satisfaction outside her marriage. (Nägerl 76)

It is therefore not surprising that a cuckolded husband had much more to fear than the loss of his inheritance – namely the loss of his honor and reputation: a cuckolded husband was considered weak and pitiful and had to face the gossip of town and insults to his sexual potency. It was very likely that cuckolds were excluded from the male world. Mocking rhymes or ballads were popular rituals referring to a husband who had lost his reputation, as well as phallic symbols, hand gestures or metaphors to represent the husband’s failure of pleasuring his wife and satisfying her sexual appetite, horns for example, which were meant to represent a man’s sexual impotence. (Nägerl 34) Another popular pejorative

term for a cheated husband was therefore the “horn-mad” or “horned” husband: it suggested that the husband was the last one to learn about his wife’s infidelity, as if he had horns on his head for everyone else to see but himself. (Nägerl 59)

> HORNER
> (***makes horns***) (emphasis added) So, sir. But I make no more cuckolds, sir. (*CW* I.i. p. 155)

A classic example of a cuckold and his cuckolding plots is Horner in *The Country Wife.* The aristocratic Mr. Horner, as the name suggests, a reference to the horns he puts on the husbands of his affairs, has a reputation for seducing married women and making cuckolds out of their spouses. Rather unusual for Restoration Comedies, Horner is both the trickster and the male lead character in *The Country Wife.* To Horner, cuckolding is both a means of passing his time as well as a tool to exert superiority over the other male characters. By letting his quack doctor spread word around town of Horner having been made a eunuch, Horner builds up a fake identity and reputation for himself as being impotent – for the sole reasons of duping husbands into a feeling of security and tricking wives into trying to arouse Horner out of vanity or curiosity. His role-play is exquisite, even his closest friends, the other rakes, are deceived, as well as Sir Jasper Fidget, who is concerned about his wife’s honor as well as his own, yet he entrusts his wife to Horner, whom he genuinely believes to be “an innocent play-fellow”. (*CW* II.i. p. 183)

Horner’s role-play is so convincing, Sir Jasper insists Horner

> [...] must even fall to visiting our wives, eating at our tables, drinking tea with our virtuous relations after dinner, dealing cards to ‘em, reading plays and gazettes to ‘em, picking fleas out of their shocks for ‘em, collecting receipts, new songs, women, ages and footmen for ‘em. (*CW* II.i. p. 182)

Horner is both involved with Lady Fidget and Margery Pinchwife, two binary opposite characters: Margery a young, innocent country-bumpkin getting involved with Horner out of curiosity and due to Pinchwife’s excessive jealousy and controlling attitude and Lady Fidget on the other hand, an experienced and scheming lady from the city who gets involved with Horner because she is bored and neglected by her husband. With Margery Horner assumes the role of

a gallant, making her believe he courts her because he truly cares for her; Lady Fidget on the other hand knows about Horner's reputation and is only concerned about her sexual gratification and maintenance of her reputation.

Horner is both a Witwoud for letting Lady Fidget and the virtuous gang use him as a sex object and a Truewit, for he is a rake "who successfully plans his intrigue and exposes the manners and follies of London society", a reference to Horner's friend Jack Pinchwife, who is so afraid of being cuckolded. Pinchwife is frantic to keep his marriage with his young and naïve wife Margery a secret and her away from the fashionable life of the town and away from other men, especially Horner with his reputation of seducing all the wives and 'horning' all their husbands. Pinchwife believes that both keeping his wife ignorant and hidden from the other rakes, "He that shows his wife or money will be in danger of having them borrowed sometimes." (*The Country Wife*, III.ii.369-370) as well as bad-mouthing her to them will keep her from being unfaithful to him:

> PINCHWIFE
> [...] Then, because she's ugly, she's the likelier to be my own; and being ill-bred, she'll hate conversation; and since silly and innocent, will not know the difference betwixt a man of one-and-twenty and one of forty. (*CW* I.i. p. 164)

We can assume that Pinchwife must have cuckolded many men otherwise he would not be so anxious about the threat of being given horns. Yet by constantly trying to keep his wife hidden and/or away from Horner and all other men, he kindles both Horner and Mrs. Pinchwife's interests:

> HORNER
> No, a foolish rival and a jealous husband assist their rival's designs; for they are sure to make their women hate them, which is the first step to their love for another man. (*CW* III.ii. p. 191)

Even though Horner is not exactly a rake-hero or commendable figure, the audience still sides with Horner, even though his intentions with Margery are not honorable, but merely revolve around sexual pleasure because Pinchwife is so obsessed with keeping his wife in a golden cage, treating her like property and robbing her of all pleasures and her personal freedom:

> PINCHWIFE
> [*Aside]*

> *[...]* Our sisters and daughters, like usurers' money, are safest when put out, but our wives, like their writings, never safe but in our closets under lock and key. (*CW* V.ii. p. 239-240)

While he is in fact a high self-monitoring character, the others look at Horner as a low self-monitoring character: Horner is never candid, neither with his affairs, nor his male friends and he is also not concerned with the fact that the rumor of his loss of sexual potency (and therefore in the eyes of all Restoration men also his virility) results in their loss of respect for him. His self-esteem does not depend on the public opinion but on the opinion of the few people, all women and his complice Quack, who know that he is in fact not impotent. Horner is superior to all the other male characters, who are unaware that he is in fact not "a man unfit for women" (*CW* I.i. p. 154) but has "by the reputation of a eunuch, the privileges of one". (Wycherley I.i. p. 158) In order to keep up the pretense, Horner pretends to be upset by Sir Jasper's obliging behavior when he says "A pox, can't you keep your impertinent wives at home? Some men are troubled with the husbands, but I with the wives" (*CW* IV.iii. p. 221)

Horner makes love to both Lady Fidget as well as to Margery, literally and figuratively, right under both Pinchwife's and Sir Jasper Fidget's eyes; Sir Jasper being so unsuspecting he practically forces his wife and sister into Horner's arms "in the credulous belief that it means a severe punishment for the eunuch." (Nägerl 35) Corman (59 ff) concludes that, because in the end Horner's actions remain unpunished by both the other characters as well as by the audience, who even applaud him for giving Pinchwife the horns he deserves for being so jealous and controlling, we can assume that Horner will continue his hypocritical and cuckolding behavior in the role of the innocent eunuch.

Characters do not necessarily have to cuckold and deceive to become superior to their rivals: it is the fact that they can tell apart their rival's inner selves from their public roles and understand that sometimes, the other characters words and actions are the opposite of their intended behavior, like Horner and Lady Fidget can, for example. It is that kind of knowledge that makes the clever cuckold or adulteress superior to the other characters.

3.5.6 The Fop

> Having humour means continually existing in a certain atmosphere [...] All the people I have known who congratulated themselves on having 'a sense of humour', and said how important it was to have one, were several lightyears away from real humour. (Priestley 150)

Priestley's quote captures the essential qualities of a fop – or the lack thereof: fops are, unlike Truewits such as the rakes or the emancipated heroines, not witty; they are Witwouds and therefore drawn to witty characters like moths to the light, like Sparkish in *The Country Wife* who so famously declares that to him "a wit [...] is the greatest title in the world" and "as necessary at dinner as a glass of good wine". (CW I.i. p. 162) As much as the fop lacks wit, he lacks the ability to read other characters (and their motives) and to detect sarcasm, making it impossible for the fop to detect mockery.

A rather conspicuous figure with endless comic potential, the fop was a standard feature in comedies of the late 17th and 18th century theatre. (Carter 1997: 31 ff) Only few playwrights could resist depicting this social type, this "important manifestation of the fashionable excesses of urban culture." (Carter 1997: 33)

The term 'fop' dates from the mid 15th century, a term appearing to have been a common label for a fool, which according to the *Oxford English Dictionary,* was derived from Latin and French. At the turn of the 17th century the term 'fop' began to be used for a folly "with a specifically 'gallant' display of vain and superficial conduct." (Carter 1997: 41)

Characterized by vanity and reckless excesses, the fop is not a comic figure like the rake but a comic fool. Educated and sophisticated gallants, fops are often pretentious and given to affectation, as they are flattering themselves and thinking themselves superior in terms of fashion sense, decorum and especially of wit - which every character but the fop seems to notice he lacks:

> SPARKISH
> Could you find out no easy country fool to abuse? None but me, a gentleman of wit and pleasure about the town? (CW V.iii. p. 242)

The fops' personality, an accumulation of aspects of social deviance, was considered a combination of features traditionally undesirable in male display such as vanity, irresponsibility, ignorance and exhibitionistic, affected conduct.

The perfect example of such a fop is Etherege's Sir Fopling Flutter, even more so than Wycherley's Sparkish. As Dorimant in *The Man of Mode* puts it, Sir Fopling is "the very cock-fool of all those fools." (*MoM* II.ii. p. 75) According to Fopling, a gentleman "[...] ought to dress well, dance well, fence well, have a genius for love letters, an agreeable voice for a chamber, be very amorous, something discreet, but not over-constant." (*MoM* II.ii. p. 60) But attempting at being a modern gallant with his French mannerisms and obsession with clothes and fashion, the flamboyant overly refined socialite overdoes it immensely with his unnatural, extrovert conduct. Fopling is a condemned as a fool instead of recognized as a Truewit and gallant, a pretentious modern fop deficient of wit the other characters deride: (Vrablitz 70)

> LADY TOWNLEY
> [...] We should love wit, but, for variety, be able to divert ourselves with the extravagancies of those who want it.
> MEDLEY
> Fools will make you laugh. (*MoM* III.ii. p. 87)

As a model fool, this social actor is controlled by his external appearance, delighting in attention and indulging in social rituals. His affectation and affected foppish mannerisms illustrate "a devaluation of the internal, natural self, in favour of the external, artificial outer shell", a favoritism of externalities which becomes most apparent in the fops' obsession with colorful and fashionable dress, wigs, perfumes and cosmetics, following the prevailing styles of the day: (Vrablitz 71)

> EMILIA
> He wears nothing but what are originals of the most famous hands in Paris.
> SIR FOPLING
> Your are in the right, madam.
> LADY TOWNLEY
> The suit.
> SIR FOPLING
> Barroy.

EMILIA
The garniture.
SIR FOPLING
Le Gras –
MEDLEY
The shoes.
SIR FOPLING
Piccard.
DORIMANT
The periwig.
SIR FOPLING
Chedreux.
LADY TOWNLEY and EMILIA
The gloves.
SIR FOPLING
Orangerie. [...] (*MoM* III.iii. p. 90)

Together with impractical accessories and fabrics colorful to excess the fop's fine appearance was usually far from the style of acceptable male dress of the time consisting of a three-piece suit (waistcoat, breeches and coat finishes with tricorn hat). The image of fops as "men of fashion" was explained as a symptom of their trivial and superficial character, an attempt at gaining public recognition through their emulative dressing rather than their personalities: (Carter 1997: 40 ff)

LADY TOWNLEY
He's very fine.
EMILIA
Extreme proper.
SIR FOPLING
A slight suit I made to appear in at my first arrival, not worthy your consideration, ladies.
DORIMANT
The pantaloon is very well mounted.
SIR FOPLING
The tassels are new and pretty.
MEDLEY
I never saw a coat better cut.
SIR FOPLING
It makes me show long-waisted, and I think slender. (*MoM* III.iii. p. 89)

Having to rely on their appearance for social recognition, the fops' motivation for attending parties and other social gatherings proved to be the desire to be seen and admired and not "genuine fellow-feeling":

> DORIMANT
> A fiddle in this town is a kind of fop-call; no sooner it strikes up, but the house is besieges with an army of masquerades straight. (*MoM* IV.i. p. 113)

Emerging public urban arenas such as coffee- or chocolate houses, parks and public gardens, ("Sir Fopling: All the world will be in the Park tonight [...]" (*MoM* III.iii. p. 90) to name but a few, which became popular around the time of the Restoration, provided popular settings for socializing and venues for business or philosophical or political debate. Or the theatre for example, a venue that the attention-seeking fops would choose not for recreation but as "their most important arena for exhibitionism." (Carter 1997: 42 ff)

The fop was considered the living representation of failed masculinity: the fops' excessive attention to decorum and social refinement and their obsession with topics which were altogether considered not suitable for male conversations such as fashion, gossip and scandal, never failed to amuse the audience:

> MRS LOVEIT
> Fo! Their periwigs are scented with tobacco so strong –
> SIR FOPLING
> It overcomes our pulvilio. – Methinks I smell the coffee-house they come from.
> [...]
> SIR FOPLING
> I sat near one of 'em at a play today and was almost poisoned with a pair of cordival gloves he wears. (*MoM* III.iii. p. 99)

Playwrights even mocked "the degenerative effect of over-refinement" which seemed apparent in the fop's physical delicateness, unmanly body image and his obsession with his figure: (Carter 1997: 54)

> SIR FOPLING
> It makes me show long-waisted, and I think slender. (*MoM* III.ii. p. 89)

Another example of Sir Fopling's affected mannerisms are for example his French interjections in conversations:

> […] Madam, I kiss your hand. I see yesterday was nothing of chance; the bellès assemblès for themselves here every day. [...] The very air thou hadst when the Marquise mistook thee i'th'Tulieries, and cried Hey Chavalier, and then begged thy pardon. (*MoM* III.ii. p. 88)

Sir Fopling has no real notion of manners, as he is totally preoccupied with his outward appearances, so to him, ‘manners’ have to do with sword-knots and side-curls. What distinguishes the fop from the Truewit or true man about town, is that the Truewit is capable of keeping his role distance:

> True wits […] are those gentlemen and ladies who are successful in presenting the socially prescribed, artful mask of the polite world. These characters are accomplished in the physical manners and deportment and adept in the required verbal dexterity, and have achieved in all outward manifestations a sense of elegant ease. (Ramczyk 15)

Truewits are, unlike the fop, excellent role-players, well aware of their role and comfortable with it and in it and unlike the fop, the Truewit can shed his role at any time. Sir Fopling Flutter does not keep any role distance at all, he embraces his role fully and is and does exactly what the others expect him to be or do. Having completely internalized his role as a fop, his self and his role are one, we can no longer distinguish which one is which; he does not play the role, he is the role – and nothing but it. Salgādo deduces that Fopling has no inner nature which leaves him unscathed by “the tension between outward form and inner nature which is a central concern in Restoration comedy [...] His affectation hides nothing, for there is nothing to him but affectation.” (Salgādo 32)

Yet somehow Sir Fopling Flutter still makes it into the title of the play and manages to have a big impact on the outcome, even though he is only a minor narcissistic, self-involved and low self-monitoring character with only a few lines. (Fujimura 114)

Other ridiculous and equally low self-monitoring and self-involved characters such as old lechers and mercenary businessmen also frequently display foppish behavior in Restoration Comedies: Old Bellair for example is ridiculed in *The Country Wife* for his foolish and outdated attempt at courting a much younger woman and Sir Jasper Fidget naïvely leads his wife directly into Horner’s rakish arms.

4 Conclusion

Restoration Comedy lives and dies with its stereotypical characters as well as with its recurrent themes, making the plots very credible, as they appear natural and not overly exaggerated or critical. Van der Weele's explanation for this phenomenon is that "[l]ife is neither acted nor felt, but is rather put to scientific analysis: it is minutely examined, weighed, measured, experimented with, and adorned with metaphors." (Van der Weele 11)

Describing social life and court wits, the accounts are mostly historical, descriptive and often biographical, the main reason why Restoration Comedies are so credible and alive, as they give a good and also true account of the images and standing of upper class society during the Restoration Period. Since Restoration Comedy is the only branch of English comedy which is almost exclusively concerned with sexual relations, in and outside the holy estate of marriage but "[w]hat is ridiculed in these comedies is not so much the institution of marriage itself as marriage attempted or undertaken for the wrong reasons." (Salgādo 22) It is important to stress that the dramatists did not only reflect the manners and modes of society and were satirical many a times "at the expense of marriage, lawyers, fops, and amorous old ladies" (Blake xx) but also sought to alter them: by holding up a mirror to the face of society and its members and giving accounts of actual or realistic Restoration circumstances, the comedies of Etherege, Wycherley and others desire to point out the silly hypocrisy of the time, which required that playwrights designed their characters as realistic as possible, making use of different types of stock characters as well as uniting and combining different recurring types.

The cunning of wives and gulling of fools are a way of life in Restoration Comedy that seem to arise out of opportunity and require no justification, just as the cuckolding of husbands "expresses hostility to marriages of convenience gone wrong, [and] not to marriage itself." (Hume in Vrablitz 87)

What is of great concern are social standards, manners, savoir faire and the social idea of beau monde, the mastery of convention, along with style as Van

der Weele (13) points out: “Style is all; and the man who lacks it stands out strikingly and ridiculously as a man apart.”

Even though fictional characters cannot orchestrate behavior as a role, cannot interpret role expectations or distance themselves from a role or an internalization process, analyzing Restoration Comedy characters by breaking up the relations between their outward forms and inner natures along the line of sociological role theory proved an adequate instrument. The analysis has shown, that it is possible to analyze types and to detect characters’ deviation from role models, even if the aesthetic representation of reality is not identical with reality as such.

(word count: 29.581)

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7 Appendix

7.1 Summary in German

Die englische Restorationsperiode war eine Zeit des Aufbruchs und der Umbrüche, die weitreichende kulturelle und sozio-politische Veränderungen nach sich zog; besonders die Stellung der Frau in der Gesellschaft wurde durch diese durchaus tumultösen Jahren geprägt. Frauen hatten sich sowohl in den Augen des Staates als auch in den Augen der Kirche Männern unterzuordnen; sie waren nicht gleichberechtigt und hatten in jeder Hinsicht wenig Rechte, eine Tatsache die sich erst gegen Ende der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts zu ändern begann.

In der Restorations Komödie wurden Charaktäre oft aus Stereotypen mittelalterlichen Satiren abgeleitet; sie folgten traditionellen Mustern, die die Frau gleichermaßen als zerbrechlich, schwach und weich darstellten und Männer als welterfahrene und geistriche sexuelle Eroberer. Aus diesen Stereotypen der naiven Frau leitete sich schließlich auch der Ausdruck „das schwache Geschlecht“ ab, ein Vorurteil so wohl als auch ein Idealbild der Restorationsperiode, der die Frau zu entsprechen hatte. Von einem heuchlerischen Patriarchat unterdrückt, wurden Frauen als schwache, dem Manne unterlegende und daher auch untergebene Wesen dargestellt.

Restorationskomödien die im 17. Jahrhundert hauptsächlich zur Belustigung und Aufklärung der Massen das Treiben der englischen Oberschicht wiederspiegelten, liefern uns heute wertvolle Hinweise über die Stellung der Frau in der damaligen Gesellschaft und über ihre Rechte und Pflichten. Weitere wichtige und immer wiederkehrende Themen der Restorationskomödien wie zwischenmenschliche Beziehungen, Liebe, sexuelle Intrigen, Seitensprünge und Ehebruch zeichnen ebenfalls ein Bild der Zeit.

In Zuge dieser Diplomarbeit erfolgt eine Analyse der Restorationskomödien Stereotypen anhand der soziologischen Rollentheorie nach Dreitzel, die, anhand von vier ausgewählten Komödien, William Wycherley *The Country Wife*

(1675), George Etherege *The Man of Mode or, Sir Fopling Flutter* (1676), William Congreve *The Way of the World* (1700) und George Farquhar *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707), eine Interpretation der Rollen der weiblichen und der männlichen Charaktäre in den Stücken ermöglichen soll. Weiters werden auch historische Hintergrundinformationen geliefert, die helfen sollen, auf die sozialen Strukturen der Restorationsperiode einzugehen und größere Zusammenhänge wie zum Beispiel die sexuelle Doppelmoral in der Zeit des 17. Jahrhunderts, zu verstehen.

7.2 Curriculum Vitae

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1996 – 2004	**AHS Theresianische Akademie, 1040 Wien.**
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